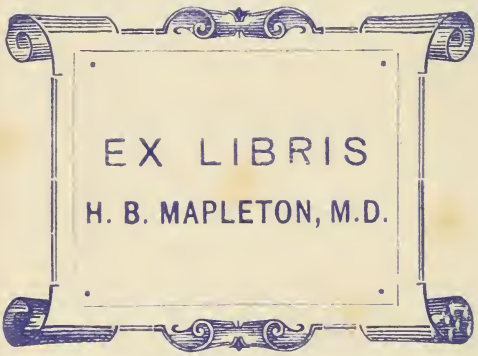
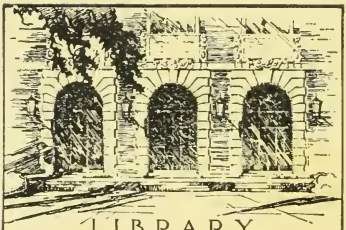
823
Un1
v.1


EX LIBRIS
H. B. MAPLETON, M.D.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/uncletweazyhisqu01obse



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
Un1
v.1

UNCLE TWEAZY

AND HIS

QUIZZICAL NEIGHBOURS.

Plummer and Brewis, Printers, Love-lane, Eastcheap.

UNCLE TWEAZY

AND HIS

QUIZZICAL NEIGHBOURS:

A COMI-SATIRIC NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

The Author of the "Observant Pedestrian,"

&c. &c. &c.

"Holds to the world a picture of itself,
"And raises sly the fair impartial laugh."
Thomson's Winter.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN AND R. MARSHALL,
STATIONERS'-COURT, LUDGATE-STREET.

1816.

823
Hn1
v.1

UNCLE TWEAZY.

CHAP. I.

IN the centrical part of a small village, not an hundred and fifty miles from the capital, resided my old uncle Peter Tweazy, one of the most petulant and unprepossessing of human beings, but so eminently endowed with the favours of fortune, that not a mushroom-picker or a plough-boy passed his gate, without dropping a bob-curtsey or a hob-nail scrape and a nod, if they could but discover the tip of Squire Tweazy's red velvet

night-cap through any window in the house; or if that was not the case, they mechanically bowed to the gate itself; for they were told always to homage the squire, as he could, when he pleased, be bountiful to the children of indigence.

Petulant beyond all idea, he was literally a living monument of self perplexity; for having been crossed in love in the early part of life, he had never forgot the disappointment, and was now in his sixty-fifth year, the most ill-natured man in existence, and certainly one of the most unpleasant companions upon earth. If he frowned, every brow must instantly contract; if perchance he forced a smile, every body must dilate their muscles from a simper to a broad grin; in short, the whole world must conform to his humour, though he took especial care never to conform to any body's.

One poor slave in the shape of a housekeeper, who had patiently borne the yoke of his troublesome services thirty years, and old Geoffry, who officiated in the united capacities of butler, groom, valet, and gardener, composed the favourites of the family, with the exception only of Alice the cook, whom he boasted could alike dress him a turtle or potatoe in perfection, a qualification which few women possessed; and my poor uncle being a great epicure, Mrs. Alice's culinary talents were highly prized by her master, which with the occasional promise of being scratched down in one corner of his will, as a reward for past services, made her doubly diligent.

Now, though my uncle was excessively morose, he could, when the humour suited, be sociable with his neighbours; and as every one was

aware of his temper, they heeded not his petulance; all looked upon him as an eccentric being; the opulent admired him for his talents, which at times, when he liked his companions, he could most ably exert; and the indigent feared his frowns. So that upon the whole, his virtues counterpoised his vices, temper excepted, which overbalanced all bounds; but as people used to say, there was no knowing *who* might become his heir, (having quarrelled all his life with the major part of his family, my father excepted,) and I happening to have been a great favourite with him when a school boy, I determined to try my luck with the old gentleman, and accordingly, self-invited, I formed a plan of passing a fortnight with him; and receiving his most gracious answer and assent, I left London with a full determination to *bear* and *forbear*, and in thirty hours found myself at his gate.

"How is your master, Geoffry?"

"Much as *usual*, Sir," and Geoffry sighed. I therefore concluded by the doleful cast of his countenance, that all was not right; however, he opened the parlour door, and in I walked, greeting the old squire, as I thought, very politely.

"How d'ye do, good Sir? I'm rejoiced to see you."

"I guessed as much, nephew; I guessed as much, by your being in too great a hurry to *wipe* your shoes, but I can assure you, my servants won't *rejoice* at the trouble of cleaning the hall; you have made more dirt in one moment, than I do in a year."

"I beg ten thousand pardons, Sir."

"Pshaw, boy!" (and he curled up his nose like a snarling dog) "that's ninehundredandninety-ninetoomany.

Why exaggerate? Why talk nonsense?"

"Wrong again," said I to myself; "well, but how do you find yourself, Sir?" and I ventured to take a chair.

"Why, I find myself every thing I should not be; a mere composition of pain and perplexity; every body and every thing conspires to torment me. How's your father and mother, hey, boy?"

"Charming, Sir, I thank you."

"Charming?" repeated my uncle with a sarcastic drawl, "that is impossible."

"I must beg leave to differ from you in that point, Sir; there are not two more worthy people on earth than my father and mother."

"Different people different opinions," rejoined my uncle, carelessly taking a pinch of snuff. "Any news in town, child?"

"Nothing particular, Sir."

"Aye, we live in a sad world; I'm sick of it."

"Very troublesome times, indeed, Sir," replied I, most humbly acquiescent.

"Not troublesome at all, if a parcel of foolish headstrong folks did not trouble themselves with what don't concern them; but pray don't talk politics in my presence; it's a subject I detest. Well, but now you haven't told how your father and mother do?"

"Both well, Sir; they have sent you a turbot, of which they beg your acceptance."

"Humph! Why did they do that, child, when it's the *only* fish I detest; I can't bear the very name of it."

"Bless me, how unlucky!" exclaimed I.

"Not at all," replied my uncle; "I shall make a present of it to the

parson; he won't think it unlucky, I'll be bound; so it's all mighty well, if it's honestly *paid* for."

This sarcasm uttered with much gravity, gave my temper a fillip; but I swallowed the pill, and directing my eye towards the garden, I observed how delightfully pleasant it appeared.

"I don't think it looks pleasant at all," said my uncle.

"It's a delightful day, Sir."

"By no means; it's too sultry; it's going to rain; there's a nasty blight hanging in the air."

"Well, I'm no great judge, to be sure, Sir."

"So it's a sign; you need not have blown a cracked trumpet."

"Why, I'm a cockney to be sure, Sir."

"So much the better," said my uncle; "an honest cockney can never be a bad man."

Unfortunately, at this moment I happened to stretch my listless form upon the chair, and slid one of my legs across the marble hearth.

"Mercy defend me!" exclaimed my uncle, "is that the new fashioned way of sitting on a chair, or are you inventing caricature postures? See, your shoes are sprawled over my hearth. If I had wanted the polish rasped off in that manner, I could have sent for one of my plough-boys."

I begged pardon, withdrew my truant foot, seated myself in an upright posture; but, alas, having assumed the indulgence of lolling my elbow on the table, and drumming a little stave of vexation with my fingers,

"Boy! boy!" rejoined my uncle, "have a care; see how you are spoiling your coat, and ruining my bright table. What, are you making drum-

sticks of your fingers, on purpose to render them as dubby as a cobler's; dear me, how terribly troublesome an unthinking person makes himself for want of a moment's attention."

The flush of vexation crossed my cheek, and I took out my handkerchief to erase the spots, which I began rubbing off.

"Zounds!" exclaimed my uncle, "why, the fellow's mad; d'ye think we have not something of less value in the house than a silk handkerchief, to make a dishclout of? Ring the bell; do, pray, if you can." Not doubting my own abilities, I seized the pull and off set such alarum as might have roused the whole village.

My uncle jumped up, stamped his feet, stopped his ears, and paced the room like a madman, till the vibration ceased, and old Geoffry stood bowing before him to know what he pleased to want.

"My hearing, my senses, a new pair of drums to my ears," said my uncle; "I'll tell you what, nephew, in cool blood," (though he foamed with passion,) "if ever you ring a bell again in such a manner in my house, I'll knock you down; you'll excuse me, but I shall certainly knock you down." I bowed, and assured him I should for the future be more on my guard.

"I desire you will," continued my uncle, "or else you'll plague my soul out. Here, Geoffry, see if you can find any thing in the house to rub these spots out with, except my best laced ruffled shirt; or if you can't, my nephew will lend you the elbow of his *new* coat, or a *silk* handkerchief."

Geoffry withdrew, and I again adjusted another erect position, but most unfortunately for me, he had left the door open, and my uncle re-

questing me to shut it, I mechanically slammed it too with my left hand.

"Plague take the fellow!" exclaimed my uncle, "I shall run wild. What d'ye mean by banging the door with one hand, as if God had'nt given you two; one would think that you was a white-smith, trying to spoil all the locks, and wrench off the hinges to make good for trade. I never saw your equal in my life; for whether sitting still or moving, you appear to me to be committing perpetual depredation."

Oh, how I wished myself at home! My very chair was planted with thorns; but I remembered my vow; "bear and forbear, rebellious heart!" said I, and this silent soliloquy tranquillized my rising choler; but the reflection I was to endure it for a fortnight, almost conquered my determination.

CHAP. II.

AT length, after a pause of some moments, "Nephew," said my uncle, "if you'll lend me your arm, I'll treat you with a walk round my grounds; you was always a promising lad, and I hope I shan't be deceived in you. I wish to make your time pass pleasantly; I shall do all in my power to make you comfortable; I'm an odd man, but I must have my way; I shall pay well for't in time; you understand me, boy; all's in *your* power, if you mind your hits. I haven't made my will yet;" and he winked me a sagacious leer, intimating a sort of *cobweb* promise.

We now proceeded to the garden, where, miserable to relate, the high narrow heels of my Cordovan Hessians so perforated the damp gravel, that wherever I trod, an ungracious cavity marked the spot, which the vigilant eye of my uncle soon discovered, and he halloed with the vehemence of a Stentor, for Geoffry to bring the flat clogs, declaring that a mad ox could not have done him more mischief.

In vain I apologized; he looked as sulky as a bear, and requested I'd pluck him half a dozen peaches; the fruit looked tempting, and I obeyed his command; but lo, when he came to *pinch* them, not one was ripe enough to please his palate.

"Psha! what an oaf thou art, child! These peaches are as hard as iron; they are not worth a ———" the sentence I must not repeat, though I both heard and felt it.

"I *thought* they were ripe, Sir," and I cast a penitent look.

"Never *think* for any body but yourself, Sir," and on we walked arm in arm, till we came within sight of a remarkable fine cherry tree, at the foot of which stood a short ladder, which my uncle requested me to ascend, and gather a leaf-full of cherries.

Alert as a squirrel, up I mounted, and espying one bunch loaded with delicious clusters, I fixed my foot on a protruding bough, and had just got the tempting prize in my hand, when from some perverse fate that seemed doomed to attend me, the treacherous basis snapped under my foot, and precipitated me to the ground, bringing with me an immense branch, to which I mechanically clung for preservation.

Stunned with the fall, and smothered with the mashed cherries, though I had incurred no other injury, had you seen my uncle's countenance, you would never have forgotten it; he stood petrified at the sight of his mutilated tree, but my broken neck or limbs seemed no object of consideration.

"I am not hurt," said I, picking myself nimbly up.

"But my tree is materially injured; you have done me a guinea's worth of damage in a moment."

"But I might have broken a limb, which would have been much worse."

"You have *limbed* my finest tree, however, Sir; run into the house, and call Geoffry."

Off I bounded, but as I had committed so much depredation on the gravel, I ran across the lawn, where I had scarce set foot, when my uncle's

terrific vociferation to "come off, come off," arrested my pace.

"What the devil are you galloping like a race-horse over the lawn for? Go round by the shrubbery, and up the espalier walk, you Sir, d'ye hear?"

I obeyed his mandate, and springing from the lawn, I took the premised direction; but I had not proceeded ten yards before the crown of my hat caught the branch of a low standard apricot, and knock off a cluster of seven, which rolled in golden balls at my feet.

"The devil has certainly bewitched me," said I, stooping to pick up the fruit, when a plaguy officious pug dog, who was at that moment making towards me, ran between my feet; and losing my equilibrium, I pitched heels over head, and dashed off a fine young nonpareil espalier at one crash.

Dismayed with vexation, I had only to pick up the apricots, which I thought most prudent to put out of of sight, by swallowing them as fast as possible; but with the espalier I could do nothing without the advice and assistance of Geoffry, though, thank heaven, my uncle was out of sight of my dilemma, and being pretty expeditious in my motions, I soon reached the hall door, where my unlucky stars again clashed in conjunction, for turning round rather too sharp, my elbow struck one of the crown glass panes, and shivered it completely.

Poor Geoffry stood a statue of astonishment and despair. "Master will never forgive you, Sir for sartin sure; they panes bees a guineas apiece; dear heart! dear heart! what a mishap!"

I then briefly related the accident of the cherry and espalier trees, the latter of which he assured me he would endeavour to repair, provided it did not meet the old gentleman's eye, "for which reason I shall persuade him to return to the house as fast as possible, for fear of rain," said Geoffry.

"Is you master always so ill tempered and snappish?" asked I.

"I have never seen him otherwise these thirty years," replied Geoffry, as we quickened our pace down the portentous espalier walk, where lay the levelled nonpariel, which he gave me hopes of being able to replace without discovery. "But the pane of glass," continued he, "how shall we get over that? We must not lay it on the dog; Master knows better, and never forgives a lie." We therefore agreed he should fetch the glazier, and I pay

the expence, as the best mode of preventing anger.

By this time we were in sight of my uncle, who was busily picking off the cherries from the broken branch, and soliloquizing with numerous oaths on my aukwardness in a muttering tone, as we approached.

"Here's a pretty job!" exclaimed he; here's a pretty concern!"

"It might have been worse, Sir," said Geoffry scratching his head. "The gentleman might have broke his neck! Lack a daisey, Sir, never care about it; it has saved me the trouble of lopping next autumn; for it must have come off; it's all seer wood, so of a bad job, I think it turns out a good one."

"What signifies what you think?" replied my uncle. "I think you talk like an old fool; clear it away out of my sight; it will be a memorial to

me of my nephew's aukwardness as long as I live."

"This has indeed been one of the perplexing hours of my existence," replied I, "but I hope I shall be able, my dear Sir, to make you amends."

"Psha! that's mighty unlikely," retorted he; "and as for *hoping* about it, hope won't mend my tree; hopes are cobwebs dangling in the air, possessing just as much substance as their texture."

Poor old Geoffry, who plainly discerned the black cloud that deepened his master's brow, and dreaded the second part of the storm, gave me a jog of the elbow, and a significant wink, and with a face of much earnest enquiry, thus addressed him:

"Pray, Sir, did you leave the hall door open?"

"Perhaps I might; I believe I did; why, what of that?"

"Why then, Sir," continued Geoffry, winking with both his eyes, "it has slapped too with the *wind* or *somehow*, and dashed a pane of glass all to shivers."

"Impossible!" cried my uncle; "totally impossible, if the wind blew a hurricane from every point of the compass, it could not break that glass."

"But it could slam the door, I suppose," rejoined Geoffry, who had now triumphantly carried his point, "for I'll swear, please your honour, I found it in that state; it made noise enough, and neither I or the maids were near it, and you and Mr. Victor were in the garden. So, in short, Sir, it must be your own fault, I'm sure. The gentleman saw all the broken glass, and was as flustered like as I was; wasn't you, Sir"

This appeal demanded as ingenious a reply as Geoffry had hatched

to save anger, and I therefore vehemently asserted that I *saw* the disaster, and it really did appear incredulous that the *wind* should have such power, but such causes and effects would occasionally take place in despite of all caution.

"It's a mighty strange occurrence," continued my uncle, musing on his cane; "there don't seem to be any wind stirring."

"Oh, yes, there is; and it's going to blow up rain in a few minutes; lauk, Sir, you haven't got your hat on; you had better return to the house the way you came, and shew Mr. Victor the rest of the grounds to-morrow morning."

"Well, I believe that will be the best way, Geoffry, for I'm horridly bored with perplexities this morning; come, Victor, give me your arm; there, gently! Don't walk so fast; you'll pull me down."

We now crept on a funeral pace, he grumbling at his own supposed carelessness, and execrating the wind, I secretly laughing in my sleeve, and admiring the ingenuity of old Geoffry, who out of three troubles had relieved me of two most consequential ones.

The mutilated pane proved the next source of perplexity, and Geoffry was dispatched down the village to fetch the glazier, who soon repaired the damage, and all was right.

Dinner shortly after made its appearance, and with it commenced my further vexations. A carp bone first stuck in my throat to torment me, and in a paroxysm of strangulation attempting to swallow some beer, I threw it all over the table cloth.

My uncle execrated my aukwardness, and observed my bread lay on the wrong side of my plate, which

those who studied men and manners ought to know; but some *never* arrived at the age of discretion."

With such like taunts, the fish and fowl was removed for a supply of tarts and jellies, both which I should have managed extremely well, if a new plague, in the shape of a codling dumpling, (my uncle's most fafavourite dish) had not made its appearance, to dress which my uncle requested me to hand him a little melted butter, which with my usual alacrity I whipped into the cavity of the dumpling, to the great dismay of my uncle, who precipitately exclaimed, "It's anchovy sauce, by G—d. Take it out of my sight; clear the table, and let me starve;" then rising abruptly, "if you can't say grace, nephew, let Geoffry repeat it over the dumpling."

"The tureens being covered, Sir, I really did not perceive the difference of the sauces. I sincerely beg pardon; but in my zeal to serve you I confess I have committed a most provoking mistake," said I.

"Aye, it's that plaguy zeal, as you call it, that does so much mischief. I little thought, when I stood sponsor for you, what a clumsy fellow you'd make. I'm sure you're old enough to know better; I believe by my chronological book you're three and twenty."

I bowed; "It's a true bill, Sir, indeed."

"I'm sorry for it," rejoined my uncle; for it bears a very bad stamp for *value received.*"

"Dear Sir. I'm the most volatile fellow upon earth; my heart's the very mansion of peace and content, and I would not willingly injure a

worm; Providence has blest me with an eminent share of health, and I dare say I shall never look grave till I'm in love."

My uncle groaned! I had forgot myself, and by endeavouring to exculpate my error, I had launched into a much greater, which nothing but his groan would have brought to my recollection; and a profound silence in consequence ensued, during which pause I had stedfastly fixed my eyes on my uncle's countenance, which displayed a complete portrait of misanthropy: his long white eyebrows shaded his downcast eye half an inch lower than usual; and his protending under lip seemed quivering with some inarticulate sentence, while I sat petrified at the visible agitation I had unintentionally caused; at length starting from his reverie:—

"Love," cried he, "Victor, my boy, is either the supreme source of earthly bliss, or the severest calamity of heaven; to me, alas! perhaps, you know, it has proved an unrooted thorn, rankling my peace of mind, and almost subduing the principles of philanthropy I once possessed; 'tis that has rendered me petulant, 'tis that has tinctured the cup of life with bitterest gall. Perhaps, you never heard the particulars, but some evening I'll endeavour to relate them as a lesson to you; till when, don't again start the subject."

While I was thanking him for his intended confidence, to which I promised to pay strict attention, a loud ringing at the gate announced the arrival of some visitor, which broke the thread of an interesting subject, by Geoffry's announcing Dr. Tonic.

CHAP. III.

IMAGINE a man of the middling stature, a complexion truly Egyptian, embellished by *two* black eyes, not a pair, for one was constantly screwed up like an old woman's money box, in consequence of a defect in the sight; a pair of enormous black bushy eye-brows, and a mouth wide enough to have swallowed his own pestle and mortar; though, in fact, beside *eating*, its chief employment was to retail all the news of the village, which the Doctor collected and disbursed wholesale; a black coat striped waistcoat, brown inexpressibles and boots, subjoined to a snug

brown bob wig, and a *cocked* hat, which tending to add *fierceness* to *ugliness*, completed his figure.

A violent hem! hem! (loud enough to have raised instant annihilation to a nervous patient) and a profound bow added to half a dozen *swaggering professional steps*, brought him to my uncle's side.

"How d'ye do, Sir? How d'ye do to-day?"

And down he sat *sniffing* his nose, *snapping* his eyes, and *distorting* his features with a variety of *nervous catches* and gestures, during which operation he had fixed his eye intently on me, which my uncle observing, said:

"That's my nephew Victor, just arrived from London, to spend some time with me."

The Doctor bowed. "How d'ye do, Mr. Victor? I thought I discern-

ed a family likeness, I declare; I shall be glad to see you with your respected uncle, to take a bit of mutton at my house. Mrs. Tonic and my family will be happy in the acquisition of your company, and if you are fond of music, my daughter Elizetta can give you a treat."

"Pish!" cried my uncle, and fidgetted upon his chair, while I assured the Doctor I would do myself the pleasure of waiting on him.

"You won't repent, I dare say," replied the Doctor, "my daughters are devilish nice clever girls; hem! hem! e'ent they, Sir?" addressing my uncle, who, instead of replying, set up a ptisicky cough.

The Doctor's glove was off in a moment, and his Mulatta fingers (decked with five mourning rings, which he constantly wore as badges of respect, sacred to the merits of his profession)

were applied to the vibration of my uncle's pulse.

"Why, you'll live to be ninety, squire; your pulse possesses the vigour of youth; but pray take your cough linctus; I'll send you another pot."

"I won't touch it, by G—d; I can't bear the sight of it. Don't I always tell you, Doctor Tonic, you and I should be much better friends, if you would not bore me to death with your medicine. Physic the whole parish, and welcome; but you nor any man alive shall physic me. Nature gave me the cough, and nature's like to take it away."

"Well, well; hem! hem! every man in his humour," answered the Doctor; "I only spoke for your relief," and his cheek assumed a brickdust tinge.

"Why don't you prescribe your self a glass of Madeira?" said my uncle; "fill the Doctor a bumper, nephew."

I obeyed; the Doctor cocked his *game* eye at it; clicked his tongue, nodded his approbation, sipped again, and then finished it in a slow gulph.

"Capital! capital! the best wine I've tasted a long time. Hem! hem! had some tolerably fair though at the young fox-hunter's t'other day; egad! Sir, we finished fifteen bottles among seven of us. Hem! hem! pretty fair dose; had a d—d head-ache next morning; took a little hiera picra; got myself all alive again; tough, Sir, tough;" and the Doctor began to unbutton his coat, and swell a little. "Wasn't a partaker of the sports of the field, because I was engaged attending Lady Faddle's whitlow; but I do assure you I made up

for it over the haunch; fat three inches deep, upon my soul, and every mouthful flavoured by a glass of claret; and if, by the bye, we should ever be fortunate enough to have a *heir* in the family, the squire swears he'll dress a turtle on the occasion, and have the boy *christened* in the *shell* afterwards. Hah! hah! hah!"

"Come, come, to order, Doctor," said my uncle; "don't laugh so loud; I ee'nt in the humour to laugh; help yourself to another glass."

The Doctor didn't want twice asking, but tossed down another bumper; then turning to my uncle, and applying his mouth close to his ear, he in an audible whisper exclaimed, "Have you heard Miss P——'s adventure with the young officer?"

"Not I;" answered my uncle peevishly; "I never attend to any body's adventures but my own, and

that's quite enough for any man, I'm sure"

"Nay, but my good Sir," resumed the Doctor, "a man cannot stop his ears."

"But perhaps you could for him," interrupted my uncle; "for I'm sure if you roar as loud to every body as you do to me, you're enough to stun a whole parish."

"Well, well; hem! hem! I'll modulate my tone," continued the Doctor, "for I must tell you the news; of course, you know there was a ball last night at the Dolphin?" My uncle nodded.

"Well, Sir, Miss P—— was there in her usual style of flirtation, and egad! picked up a young officer of dragoons, who happened to be a sojourner at the Dolphin, and danced with him the whole evening; lost her shoe, fainted away in his arms twice

(for the pleasure of being restored by his caresses, as every body allowed,) and in short, rendered herself extremely ridiculous. Well, Sir, but how did it finish?"

"Why how the d——l should I know?" exclaimed my uncle.

"Then, Sir, I'll just explain. When the ball broke up, it happened to be four o'clock in the morning, and of course, the captain could do no less than see his fair partner safe home; he had tied his fine cambric handkerchief over her head to prevent cold, and just as they reached her father's door, before they rapped; observe you, before they attempted to lift the rapper; Sir, my gardener unexpectedly crossing an opposite style, espied the Captain in the very act of ——" Here the Doctor was seized with a sudden tickling in the œsophagus; from what cause I could not define.

"Why, the story seems to choak you, Doctor," said my uncle sarcastically; "you had better not explain any farther clap a plaister over the sore part."

"There happens to be no sore part in the case," replied the Doctor; "but as I was observing, the Captain was in the act of——." Again the tickling strangled the remainder of the sentence, which so provoked my uncle, whose patience and credibility were alike exhausted, that he petulantly exclaimed:

"D—— the act, as you call it, and the cough too; why don't you take some of your specific linctus you recommended me just now?"

Poor Doctor Tonic, after hem! hem! hemming a score times, (every volley of which acted as an electric shock on my uncle's nerves,) thus continued, much to the gratification of my curiosity, to know what *act* the

Captain and Miss P—— were engaged in, that could excite the Doctor's attention, and so eager repetition, as caused him to choak before he could explain it. "Sir," resumed the Doctor, "the action I mean to explain was a *liberty;* yes, Sir, a daring open liberty by broad day-light; the very sun shone upon them at the moment."

"What moment?" said my uncle, staring aghast.

"Why, at the very moment, he was kissing her hand, after drawing off her glove, which my gardener positively saw him put into his pocket. There now, what d'ye think of that? what do you think of that? hey! squire, hey?"

"Wheugh!" cried my uncle, setting up a whistle of derision, "if that's the summum-bonum of the story, I am clearly of opinion it's one of your *village fudges;* you'll excuse

me; but in the first place, I never *believe* what I *hear*, and always *doubt* what I *see*."

"Hem! hem! that's being incredulous with a vengeance," retorted the Doctor, piqued at the disbelief of his captious auditor; "however, what I have asserted is fact; my Daniel can prove it. I had it from him."

"Then give it him back," said my uncle, "and, harkye me! tell him he's an old fool to gabble about a pack of boys and girls; if he'd been digging in your garden, he'd have been much better employed. Now, I warrant you have spread this pretty tale as thick as you would the cantharides on a blister. I'll be bound every child in the parish knows it; and so, between physic and scandal, you continue to pick a living, by picking others. Don't be so professional; don't *probe* too close; you understand me."

The Doctor looked confused, and my uncle poured him out another glass, and in half an hour the bottle was finished.

By this time the Doctor's best eye began to twinkle like a *star* of a *wet night*, and after the ceremony of tea handed round by Geoffry, my uncle proposed his favourite game of three-handed cribbage, and down we sat, where the poor Doctor was completely eased of carrrying home the weight of a crown piece, which not a little irritated his temper, and a light supper and a bowl of punch sent him reeling home at midnight under the protection of Geoffry.

"Now, if he should meet Miss P—— and the Captain," said my uncle, "he won't discern any liberties, I'll be bound for him, a foolish old dolt. The man has his virtues, I don't dispute, and he has his vices;

in short, he is a complete *country apothecary*, who knows every thing, and makes much ado about nothing; but you shall accept his invitation, and be introduced to his family; you know what he has said of his daughters;" and my uncle smiled for the first time I had seen his muscles inclined to relax.

"And what do you say of them?" said I.

"I say nothing; I leave every one to judge for themselves," replied my uncle; "but come, the hour is late; the female servants are gone to rest, and as soon as Geoffry returns, I will shew you your bed room; for you must know I see all the candles out before I retire; but you shall have my light to undress by, and then I'll fetch it away myself."

Geoffry now returned, and after the usual ceremony of fastening the

hall door, wished his master good night, and decamped to bed.

My uncle now began his usual round of inspecting every room in the house, to see no particle of fire remained alight, and I was deputed to carry the two candles, (one lighted and the other unlighted,) and stood centinel outside every door, that, as Paddy says, he might have a *clear view* in the dark.

We had examined six apartments in this style, when most unfortunately, in shutting the door of the drawing room, the wind extinguished the candle, and left us as motionless as two Egyptian mummies.

My uncle vociferated a volley of execrations, while I proposed calling the servant to strike a light; but my uncle peremptorily refused, and said they were all snoring long ago, and should not be disturbed.

"Keep to the right hand, and take hold of my arm," continued my uncle; "we must find our way up as well as we can; I'll conduct you to your chamber, and you must tumble into bed, and thank yourself only for the inconvenience you have suffered."

"Do let me call Geoffry, Sir?"

"No, Sir, I tell you once more you shall *not* call Geoffry; so come along."

"But suppose you should fall, Sir," continued I.

"Why, then you must pick me up again. Why suppose things that may never happen? None but fools ever trouble themselves to *suppose;* a wise man scorns an idea so incongruous to reason."

By this time we had groped our way to the hall clock, the exact con-

trary direction to what we ought to have taken.

"Zounds!" exclaimed my uncle, "we're all wrong; we must face about to the left. I've hit my elbow a confounded blow."

"I was afraid you would, Sir," replied I; "I'd give a guinea for a light. I hope you haven't hurt yourself."

What if I have?" answered my uncle snappishly; "you're the cause of it."

Thus squabbling, stumbling, and poking about, at length my uncle found the door of my chamber, and with outstretched hands twirling in pugilistic attitudes, we caught hold of the bed curtain.

"We're landed at last," cried my uncle, "and you must now shift for yourself. My room joins this; therefore, we are now safe; scramble into

bed as well as you can, and I'll do the same."

A reciprocal "good night," "good night," ended our dark perplexity, and glad was I the day had finished, and put an end to my troubles.

CHAP. IV.

THE next morning I was up with the larks, and down in the garden; for, as I understood my uncle never rose early, I determined to improve the moment, and try if I could not assist Geoffry in replacing the espalier, which, with my assistance and his dexterity, we soon accomplished so as to preclude discovery; and thankful was I to Geoffry for his ingenuity on that subject, and also the broken pane, for which I rewarded him with a crown, and we were reciprocally pleased.

I then returned to the house, where I amused myself with a volume of

Petrarch for above an hour, till the hobbling footstep of my uncle sounding on the stairs, made me close the book, and offer him the salutation of the morning.

"How have you slept, Sir?" said I.

"Never worse; I've been pinched to pieces with the cramp."

I expressed my sorrow at the intelligence, but no soft reply seemed to palliate my awkwardness, or seal my pardon; for he looked as cross as a cat in a passion, when her ears lay horizontal, and she spits at her enemy most ungracious.

Breakfast was immediately served, and my uncle mumped his French roll still sullen; I ventured to start several subjects, but none agreed with his humour; for his only reply was a laconic snap of "like enough;" "may be so;" "should not wonder;" expressions which, in my opinion, al-

ways tend to quash a subject, but never offer an encouragement.

The breafast equipage had not been removed five minutes before Doctor Tonic presented himself at the gate.

"Here comes old Dose-um with some fresh species of scandal," said my uncle; "I just wish he was an hundred miles off; for I'm not in the humour to listen to his gabble."

The Doctor made his entre as usual, hem—hemming, winking, sniffling, bowing, and how-d'ye-doing, then slapping me on the shoulder, "you're a sad chap, Mr. Victor; you filled my glass too often; got a wretched head-ach this morning. Hem! hem! don't know how I got home. Mrs. Tonic read me a pretty curtain lecture, I assure you. Hem! hem! I just called to say we shall be glad of your company to meet a little

party to-morrow; dinner on table at three precisely; village hours to be sure; but we medical men must make our meals conform to our engagements; we'll make you heartily welcome; my house is liberty hall. A-propos! I must introduce you to my sons, two clever dogs! fine fellows; Tonics to the back bone; chips! family chips! Sir, yes, yes, they've feathered their nests well, I promise you; let my son Bob alone for a *marksman;* got a nice girl for his wife and plenty of the needful; a *Broomfield* one stick and stiver, tight little heiress; no bad catch, hey?"

"A very happy man, Sir, no doubt," said I.

"Aye, happy as a lark! Prosperous profession; d——d clever dog! be a physician very shortly. Yes, yes, the Tonics are the family to get cash; why now there's my second

son, Dick, what has he done for himself? Married a ten-thousand pounder; there's luck for you! But then, he's a sharp shrewd fellow; wit and ability at his finger's end! In short, he's a Tonic, and I should not wonder if my girls were to be as fortunate in a pair of coronets. Who knows what may happen?"

The Doctor now drew his watch; "Hey-day! I've exceeded my time; my horse is waiting," continued the Doctor. "Good morning, gentlemen; you'll pilot your nephew, squire; beef and bottle at three, remember;" and in a consequentia full trot he left the room, crossed the hall, and swung his tail out of the gate in a twinkling.

"The Doctor," said I, "seems prim full of family consequence; he seemed determined to let me know what company I was going to be introduced to."

"The Doctor don't want for pride," replied my uncle; "it's an hereditary legacy that devolved from his family, with the addition of a disorder called the *horse mania*, with which they were all individually afflicted; for so long as the Doctor could but ride, it was all he cared about; racing, trotting matches, or hunting, he was always cock of the game; but as he advanced in years, the infection abated; and the Doctor now contents himself with a knife and fork and a bottle at any table in the parish; but come, boy, let us equip ourselves for a ramble round the village, and I'll introduce you to some of my neighbours."

My uncle now dashed off his red night-cap, and retired with Geoffry to his dressing-room, while I sprucified myself to encounter the killing eyes of Miss Elizetta Tonic and all

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS LIBRARY

the village belles, who were no doubt bent upon quizzing the young cockney; but as my heart was extremely independent and perfectly in my own keeping, I sallied forth like a second *Achilles*, invulnerable, as I thought, at all points.

No sooner was my uncle dressed, than he dispatched old Geoffry with the turbot as a present to the rector, adding his compliments, and he should call on him in the course of the morning; but before we attempt to start for our peregrination, I must give you the portrait of my uncle just emerged from the duties of his dressing closet.

He was habited in an apple green coat, an embroidered waistcoat, black satin inexpressibles, fastened at the knees by gold buckles, a pair of which, in a quadrangular form, graced his shoes; his ancestorial cane was orna-

mented with three gold enamelled sliders, surmounted by an amber head, the centre of which was adorned by a superb ruby, and was the terrific talisman of every crying child and dog in the village; a small low-crowned hat, (whose rim partook of no shape either round, three-cornered, or square, but something in the similitude of a warped oval pye dish,) bound with a narrow gold lace, was squeezed on over a full powdered tye wig, to which was attached a small bag, which positively rendered him a complete Bond-street caricature in the semblance of some famous tooth-drawer, while, as I contemplated his figure, I blessed my stars that I was not compelled to sport such a companion in the public walks of London; for in fact I felt such strong sensations of risibility influencing every muscle, that I dared not look

him in the face for several minutes, till I had conquered the troublesome convulsion of an inward chuckle.

At length off we marched arm in arm, but as usual, I walked too fast; I sprung like a doe; I scampered like a penny postman; I walked like the motion of a sedan chair, because from the length of my step I heaved my body in such a violent manner that my uncle declared I lifted him off the ground at every jerk. I begged pardon (concluding my perplexities were again beginning, and mortified that at the age of twenty-four I should not know the proper use of my legs, without my uncle's back-string as a check,) and of course willing to endeavour to please, I slackened my pace, and we proceeded towards a handsome red brick house, which my uncle pronounced to belong to Mr. Prolix, the village lawyer,

with whom having trifling business, we called to adjust, and were introduced by young *Penna-Polygraph*, the smirk engrossing clerk, into a sort of cat-swing office, crammed with all the quill and parchment treasures of the owner, who was counting over six and eight-pence from the hands of a poor peasant for a threatening letter, *three halfpence* of which he refused taking, declaring them bad, "according to law;" but our unexpected appearance settled the difficulty in one moment, and the poor client was ordered to withdraw, while Mr. Prolix silently pocketed the fee without demur.

My uncle, in his usual unceremonious way, abruptly introduced me, and Mr. Prolix in return bowed with stately consequence: he was a tall lusty man, of swarthy complexion, a short pug nose turned up close be-

tween his eyes, and stuck in the cavity of a pair of cheeks that gave him the appearance of a brown cherubim, such as I have seen carved in oak over the altar piece of a country church; he begged us to be seated, (probably that we might take up *less* room,) and after a few minutes conference on matters that did not concern me, we arose to take our departure.

"You'll take a glass of bounce this morning, good Sir?" said Mr. Prolix addressing my uncle with a low query countenance, mingled with the hopes of a negative.

"When did you ever know me do such a thing?" replied my uncle; "No, no, I've no opinion of your morning dram drinkers; excuse me, but it's no compliment; it's a mere insult to nature; keep your bounce, Master Prolix, it sha'nt bounce me. Your servant, your servant. How's

Mrs. Prolix and the young "cherubim and seraphims," for methinks, "they continually do cry," whenever I come into the house; aye, there's your nursery peal commencing; good morning! good morning!"

Mr. Prolix, whose bronze cheek mantled with a tincture of indignation, made no reply, but with a sullen bow conducted us to the door, and on we marched.

"Why, you touched the lawyer pretty sharp, Sir," said I, as we walked on.

"Yes, I *bounced* at him, sure enough; he knew he could not affront me more, though he has repeated the question fifty times. I hope I have now shamed him out of it; a glass of liquor may do to *bamboozle* the wits of a *clodhopper*, but he forgets who he's dealing with when he talks to me."

"Is he clever in the profession?" asked I.

"Oh, yes, he's a tight hand at a *will*; for instance, he can entangle a major and minor legacy with the dexterity of a spider, and like Harlequin, transform an old woman's *plum cake bequest* into a chancery mess of *law pottage*, by bringing the *infant's* noble to nine-pence; and the *adult's* nine-pence to *nothing*; so much for *law*, equity out of the question; zounds, I hate lawyers as I hate the——"

My uncle had scarce finished his ejaculation, when the rector came in sight, and we improved our pace to greet him. "Here comes one of the best men living," said my uncle, and in a moment their hands joined in reciprocal union.

"The Reverend Dr. Markwell," said my uncle, introducing the venerable divine; "my nephew, Victor,

good Doctor, whom you've so often heard me mention as an unruly dog of a school boy, but I believe he can hold a Latin confab with your reverence in tolerable style."

Doctor Markwell, the express image of benignity in form and feature, pressed my hand in the most friendly manner, and assured me he augured much pleasure in the prospect of my society, and concluded by observing his library was at my service during my residence in the country, which he hoped I should avail myself of whenever agreeable; and tomorrow," added the worthy man, "I shall have an acquisition to my family by the arrival of a young lady, who is placed by her guardian under my care, during his absence on a foreign tour. Mrs. Markwell is delighted with the idea, and we shall

be happy to add your company to our society."

I thanked him for his proffered civility, assured him I would avail myself of the privilege he so kindly gave me, and hoped I should not be an intruder.

"The boy's full of compliments," said my uncle, "but do me the favour when you go home, to drink his health over a turbot you'll find awaiting your appetite, and if it proves good, give him credit as the donor. Good bye? we have a few calls to make, and your time may be precious; we'll look in upon you to-morrow."

Doctor Markwell now pursued his walk, and we ours, till we came within view of Lady Lustre's villa.

CHAP. V.

MY uncle paused at the gate to gain a little breath, as the road lay on the acclivity. "And here," said he, "I shall introduce you to a most amiable woman, the pride of the village, the patroness of suffering virtue; the real and sincere friend, who deserts not in the hour of indigence, nor fallaciously courts you in the day of affluence. Universally beloved by every class of society, Lady Lustre rises the pattern of excellence to her sex in general."

My uncle rang at the gate, but was informed by the butler her ladyship was just gone out in the carriage to

take an airing; we therefore merely left our card, and proceeded onwards, till in crossing through a small meadow, a dashing young man moved his hat to my uncle, who returned the salute; but neither spoke.

"Who is that gentleman, Sir?" asked I.

"A young tradesman in the town, the unexpected inheritor of a handsome fortune, left him by a rich old woman in the moment of caprice, who, if she had studied her duty to her *real heir* a little *more*, and her brandy bottle a little *less*, would not have left a stain on her memory, from the *false promises* she evinced, and the disappointments she entailed by her perfidious fallacy; for she was nothing less than a composition of deceit and avarice; the tear of the poor never bedewed her grave, and if ever one dropped from the eye of this said

young Windfall, whom we have just passed, it must have been the tear of *joy* at his *unexpected acquisition*; in consequence of which, he soon after brushed up his old ramshackle house, and held up his head with as much ostentation as any petty King; came up to London, and married a Miss Sterling"

"He's a very fortunate young man," said I.

"He is, thanks to God and good luck," replied my uncle; "but I knew him the height of my chair, when he used to be at the old woman's house, fetching her snuff-box, carrying her work-basket, handing the toast plate, and, in short, performing all the various duties that children are required in the capacity of a little *dependent* visitor, for which he was rewarded with a penny apple pye every market day out of the old woman's pocket,

little dreaming at that time of becoming the *Broomfield sweeper* of her old bureau, from which sanctorum a mouldy half guinea had been occasionally drawn with much pomp once a year as a present to her *only heir* and *namesake*, under the assurance that it was the earnest of *future* favours, which at her demise was to constitute "*something very handsome*," which something amounted to a few old furrows, stacks, and barns, which not being exactly convenient to take with her, and well knowing him the *hereditary heir*, she did him the honour to tie up for life in the *immense sum* of fifty pounds per annum, subject at the decease of him and his heirs, to revert to the said Mr. Windfall, whom she nominated trustee of this splendid bequest, much to the surprize of the whole village, who had heard her subtle promises, and

repeatedly congratulated the young heir apparent, who, as the last of the family, and son of her favourite (but equally misled) nephew, had an undoubted claim both on her *conscience*, honour, and gratitude, had she possessed either. Such was the woman, for I knew her well; and such the characters we are doomed to meet with in the world! Aye, Victor, my boy, those lessons of experience are very painful tasks to learn, but they bear a great moral."

"It is indeed, Sir," replied I, "a great pity that our follies should stamp a blot on the tablet of that memory which should most revere our virtues; but so it often happens, through some idle caprice of the moment, or *insinuating artifice of subordinate foes*."

My uncle grated his cane along the sandy road in deep rumination for at

least twenty yards; then suddenly pausing, and striking it vehemently on the ground, exclaimed, "I have this moment fixed upon my heir, but I shall leave him an *Irish* legacy."

"I don't exactly comprehend your meaning, Sir," replied I.

"Why, Sir," resumed my uncle, "I mean to give it him in my life time, that I may have the pleasure of seeing how he prospers; if he makes ducks and drakes of it, I shall know better how to dispose of the remaining crumbs; if he proves what my hopes and wishes should have, I shall die in peace, with the glorious satisfaction of knowing I have promoted his happiness, and rewarded his virtues by the comforts of prosperity, improved by his own diligence and prudence."

I don't know how it was, but I heaved an involuntary sigh, an in-

terested one it certainly was, for my uncle had drawn such a picture, that I wished it my own portrait; but alas! I well knew I had little chance of success; and yet his momentary ejaculation puzzled me. A few minutes more brought us to the post office, where my uncle procured a shillings-worth of halfpence; "because," said he, "whenever I go through the village, I pay toll to every child I see with a clean face, by which means, (as my rambles are extremely uncertain in their period,) there's scarce ever a smutty infantine face in the parish, as you will presently see."

The post-master smiled, and observed, that the appearance of my uncle always spread such a contagion of emulative cleanliness through the village, that in two minutes after the first little pair of eyes espied him,

every pump was in requisition; and so it proved; for we soon after met above twenty just returned from school, at all of whom my uncle scowled his eye-brows with a half-suppressed smile, as he dropped the expected halfpenny to each, one boy excepted, whom my uncle pinched by the ear, exclaiming, "you're a slovenly rogue; you've not got a copper face."

The boy stared, and mechanically stroking his chin, as if to feel its composition; "I'm sure I'se got a feace," said he.

"Yes," returned my uncle, "you have got a rare *dirty face*," then shaking his cane at him, "go along home, you nasty fellow; there's no halfpenny for you."

The disappointed boy sneaked off with slow and sullen pace, hoping,

as he leered over his shoulder, to be called back; but he was mistaken. My uncle never broke his word, by which means his advice or punishments were both effective.

CHAP. VI.

WE had not proceeded far before we met the carriage of Lady Lustre, who would take no denial to our getting in and returning home with her, which politeness compelled us to do, and in a few minutes we found ourselves seated in her hospitable mansion, where a salver of fruit, sandwiches, and negus was placed before us.

The urbanity of her manners, the sensibility of her conversation, the engaging gentility of her address, all bespoke Lady Lustre the woman of education; and though now in her grand climacterick, her company was

as fascinating as in the days of her youth; no uncouth county dialect, no garrulity marked her conversation; she had been bred in the school of gentility, of which she was still head pupil, and never was a more agreeable hour than we passed in her society; she had selected a little museum of natural and Asiatic curiosities, in which her taste was eminently displayed, and afforded to a lover of antiquity great amusement; we were also treated with the inspection of a pearl cabinet, richly ornamented with superb oriental china, which, with a pair of magnificent globes, a choice library of the most valuable authors, and collection of pictures from the most celebrated pencils, with a port-folio of proof engravings, constituted the amusement of the visitor, and displayed the genuine taste of the owner.

My uncle observed her Ladyship had made a very short ride.

"I have," replied she, "but I shall extend it bye and bye, for to say the truth, I went to call on one of my cottage pensioners, whom I found in the straw, something downcast at the arrival of two little strangers instead of one, as she is already the mother of five; and it is to order some caudle, a few requisites, and some broth for the children, that I have hastened back; but I shall call again in the evening, and I hope to find her in better spirits."

I saw a tear of feeling start in my uncle's eye, and slipping a guinea into the hand of Lady Lustre, he entreated she would give it to the cottager. Her Ladyship seemed highly pleased, and wishing her good morning, we returned home, as my uncle seemed to feel himself rather fatigued.

The ceremony of dinner passed over happily for me, without any more blunders on my part; the conversation of my uncle (whose peevish humour seemed to relax,) grew more pleasant; and he would I believe have given me the promised detail of his sorrows, if another visit from Doctor Tonic had not interrupted him.

"D'ye want a hand at a game of crib?" asked the Doctor popping in his head, with one eye directed *east* and the other *west*.

"If you are come to take your crown revenge," said my uncle, "sit down, and we'll accept your challenge."

"Hem! hem! I'm in a lazy humour to-night, fit for nothing; just called in at the manor, and egad! nothing would serve the squire but a fresh bottle of port, which was so prime that somehow the butler had drawn

a second cork before I was aware of it. Sad dog that young squire! had a design upon me, I do believe. Ecod, Sir, I had great difficulty to find the park gate, but I've been home, taken a few antidotal drops, and had a sound nap in my elbow chair; and now I'm just the thing for a chat or a rubber.

"And if any body meets with an accident, and requires your assistance?" said my uncle.

"Why then I'm engaged with a *patient*, and my son Bob must officiate. Hem! hem! Why, if I was to gallop after every patient's whims, I might ride twenty miles after a cut finger or a chilblain. No, no, always send Bob to the fanciful squad. How d'ye think now I was served the night before last? A servant rapped at the door about eleven o'clock, just as we had retired to rest, and requested my

immediate attendance on his mistress Lady Flam, up at the Grove, about a mile and half off.

"Much vexed at being disturbed, and my son Bob having had a hard day's fatigue, I enquired what was her Ladyship's complaint. He replied, "he did not know; but I must follow him immediately, and if I pleased, take his horse instead of waiting for my own."

Thinking the exigence was great, and Lady Flam being one of my best patients, (though by the bye a d—d whimsical one,) I hastily huddled on my clothes, and jumping on the servant's horse, left him to walk back, and gallopped off at full speed. Well, Sir, the door flew open, and Lady Flam met me in the hall, dissolved in tears.

"My good lady," cried I, "what's the matter?"

"Oh, Doctor, I'm sorry to give you so much trouble, but knowing your skill and humanity, do look at my poor dear little Sylvio, (the pug dog) who has been in fits these two hours, and prescribe something to restore him."

"And is *that all* your grievance, Madam?" replied I, bursting with passion; "God bless my heart, I'm no dog doctor; throw a bason of water over him, by all means."

"Not for the world!" says her ladyship; "it would give the dear creature his death with cold."

"Not more so, Madam, than calling a Christian from a warm bed into the damp midnight air; but really, Madam, as I never studied canine maladies, it is out of my power to prescribe; my rest is very essential to me, and if you will leave the dog to nature, you'll find her an abler physi-

cian than I am. I wish your ladyship good night, and request you'll let your servant fetch back the horse in the morning."

"Good God! how cruel! how inhuman! I could not have believed it;" exclaimed her ladyship, as I closed the door; and when the servant came to fetch the horse back, he informed me the dog was dead, and his Lady desired I would make out my account, and send it in. There's a pretty job; I must have a consultation with her to-morrow morning; it won't do to lose a patient through the casualties of a d—d pug dog."

"I wonder you hadn't contrived to make a *customer* of the animal," replied my uncle laughingly.

"Oh, curse the dog! I saw he was dying, or else I would have sent in a few bottles to repay my trouble. Egad, if she cuts with me, I shall re-

peat the story to everybody, to exonerate my credit; and, depend upon it, I'll christen her Lady *Fitz-Pug!* Ha, ha, ha! that's no bad one! Is it, Mr. Victor? Yes, I will, I will, by G—d!"

"Have a care, Doctor," said my uncle; "the women a'n't to be duped at all times; it is not every one that submits to calumny and insult with impunity; a fair reputation and a clear conscience is a fortune to any man, and the most essential passport of life."

"Hem, hem!" cried the Doctor, who did not seem to relish my uncle's *bolus* so well as his own *Album Græcums;* "we have all our faults, to be sure."

"True," replied my uncle; "but how often do we acknowledge or amend them? The beam and the mote, Doctor, hey!"

"Have you heard," continued the Doctor, "of the new inmate Dr. Markwell expects to-morrow? Why, I understand she's the most beautiful, accomplished girl, that ever was seen; and as for weight, there's no want of metal, I'm told: should not care if I'd got a few more sons to strike up to such a prize: sense, beauty, and money; three phœnixes, by God! What say you, Mr. Victor?"

I replied, I could not possibly judge till I had seen the young lady.

"Aye, but I shall see her the first of any man in the village, I'll bet a bottle."

"May-be you'll wait at the rectory door till her arrival," observed my uncle. "I'll tell you what, Tonic; you ought to have a pension voted you by the parish, for you are the village chronicle; you know every-

body's concerns, but few know yours, unless they speak for *themselves.*".

" That's the beauty of it," said the Doctor, screwing up his funny eye. " Hear, see, and say nothing."

" Say nothing of your *own* affairs," rejoined my uncle; " for I'm sure you hear and say enough of other people's; so you break the adage, and yet pretend you abide by it. And, pray now, don't you know who this said Miss Phœnix is? her birth, parentage, and education—life, character, and behaviour—eh! Doctor?"

" No; I can't find out the particulars yet; but I know she's an orphan."

" Poor girl!" ejaculated my uncle; " then it's well for her she has property, otherwise she'd meet little respect in *this* village; and as to getting a husband, our young men are

proverbial for marrying girls of fortune, with as little pretension either from *merit*, *person*, or *equality*, as a beggar has to a coronet. No disparagement to *your sons*, Doctor; but, upon my soul, what with their *interested* motives of union, and their *unconquerable* attachment to drinking, they may literally be styled '*The lads of the bag and bottle.*'"

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried the Doctor; "it's a good joke, a good joke! the best I've heard a long time! Hem, hem!"

"It's a truism, however," cried my uncle, "which you have my permission to repeat: I never say any thing I am ashamed of; so that every garrulous old woman in the vicinity may repeat it with as many embellishments as she pleases. A fig for scandal; I hate all tale-bearers."

"So do I," said the Doctor, pulling up his frill, and rubbing his brown *spuds* together: "they are a dangerous set of people; very much so, indeed. No man alive loves a bit of news better than *I* do; but I detest you *fudgers*. Truth, sir, the naked truth, for Timothy Tonic. A-propos! pray, have you heard of a certain great man being gone to London this morning, upon an *unpleasant embarrassment:* in fact, I saw him get into the coach myself: I wished him a pleasant journey; and, with a very grave face, he answered me, "he much *doubted* it would prove so." Of course, I immediately *guessed* how matters stood."

"Then you've only *guessed* at it," replied my uncle; "you *suppose*—you *imagine*—you *think*—you have an *idea*, on which collective fabric of

visions you build your assertion, without the slightest foundation."

"Aye, but I have my *suspicions*," answered the Doctor.

"Pshaw," retorted my uncle; "suspicion is the vilest imp of hell, worse than all the hellebore, aquafortis, and hemloch, in your shop: it's the strongest poison upon earth. What! you a Doctor, and not know how to eradicate such a complaint; unless, indeed, it's *constitutional*."

"Let's have a rub," exclaimed the Doctor; and thus the controversy ended; though, in my opinion, the man of medicine had received a very good *rub*, from my uncle's incontrovertible truisms: and down to cribbage we sat; where, in about two hours, the Doctor lost fourteen sixpenny games, and betted as many shillings with me on his own *superior*

play, for he was reckoned the *best cribbage-player* in the village; but Fortune, being in a fickle mood, gave us the advantage of her favours, and sent the poor Doctor home, a second time, the picture of ill luck and vexation.

CHAP. VII.

THE next morning a new visitor made his appearance, to give my uncle and self a very polite invitation to tea and supper the next evening. He was a comely, good-looking man; well-meaning, but no pupil of Chesterfield. Honest and hospitable, he had risen in the world from very low extraction; but, by diligent industry, had collected a comfortable competence, in a line of business in which he styled himself a *hair-contractor;* that is to say, in the more vulgar acceptation of the word, his profession was that of a *hair-dresser;* and he *contracted only* with hot curling-irons,

frizzing-combs, and scissors. But, as he had now retired from business, it mattered not what he *had* been; and my uncle, who esteemed him as a good kind of harmless being, indulged him generally with a visit every Christmas: but having heard of my arrival, he had paid his earliest respects, to request the *honour* of my company, and introduction to his family.

My uncle accepted the invitation; and after a few "So says he" and "So says I," observations on the weather, the price of provision, and various other topics, too insignificant to detail, Mr. Macfriz took his departure.

"I want to shew you men and manners, Victor," said my uncle, as he closed the door; "for which reason, I shall accept all the invitations I receive. We've a variety of cu-

rious characters in our village, I promise you; and I don't doubt but we shall meet a rare party at the Doctor's. Arm yourself at all points, both for conquest, or resistance."

I assured him I entertained no fears of captivation, as I had not yet seen the woman to whom I could devote my heart.

"Aye, boy," exclaimed my uncle, shaking his head, and sighing deeply, "you never saw Cecilia Delmond. But why does memory revert to past affliction? Amuse yourself, my dear boy, for half an hour, while I retire to my study."

I assured him I should employ the passing interval in writing to London. The word London vibrated on his ear, and he re-opened the door. "Add my kind love to my sister, and thanks to your father for his present; and, d'ye mind me, Victor, tell

them not to expect you home till I'm *tired* of your company."

Oh, oh! thought I, these are hopeful symptoms of my becoming a favourite, if my uncle's humour does not change.

It may now be necessary to inform the reader, that my name is not Victor Tweazy, as many people might imagine, but "Victor St. Alban," my mother being own sister to my uncle, who never cordially approved of her alliance with my father, because they differed in political opinions; though my mother so far prevailed over my uncle's animosity, as to persuade him to stand godfather to me, having lost three successive sons, and I, of course, being the rarity of the family; in consequence of which, he chose to give me the name of Victor, though he never would assign any reason for so doing: and whether my infantile

prattle pleased him, or what attractive charm I possessed, I know not; but I always obtained from him some token of encouragement as a schoolboy; and the emulative pleasure of being styled "a bright lad," "a sharp little dog, and such-like epithets (all which served as a stimulus to my learning), always rendered me more attentive to my uncle than the rest of my family: but having gone from school almost immediately to college, where I remained till I came of age, I had not been in the habit of seeing him for several years; and my father always stigmatising him by the character of "a *crusty old churl*," "an *eccentric misanthropical being*," I had never before troubled myself upon the subject of seeking his favours, or courting his company; till at length, by some *instinctive impulse* of *fate* or

fortune, I determined venturing the trial of a visit; and unfortunately finding him in a most peevish humour, and my star of perplexity happening to reign pre-eminent at that moment, our meeting seemed destined to be viewed through the jaundiced eye of reciprocal prejudice; though, in the ultimate, it proved only a junction of mere common occurrences, which my uncle seemed totally to have forgotten, and we were the best friends imaginable; the only difficulty remaining was to keep so; a point I flattered myself I could easily accomplish, by a little attention to his pleasures, and subordination to his wishes; the attainment of which would cost me nothing but the government of my own temper, by which I should receive, in fact, essential benefit.

I was just folding my letter when my uncle entered the room, exclaiming, "Well, boy, how d'ye come on?

"I have finished, Sir," replied I.

"Indeed!" answered my uncle. "Why, surely, yours must be the pen of a ready writer, or you have popped them off with a bob-short."

"I, in general, write very expeditious," said I.

"There's no merit in that, except you were bred a short-hand writer," replied my uncle; "though it is not exactly writing that captivates me; I attend only to the orthography; I can readily excuse a rough hand but to read a letter from the pen of a fool is agony."

"Very true," replied I; "but surely orthography, like oratory, is a peculiar gift."

"It may, in some sense," rejoined my uncle; "but a proper attention

to the system of education, subjoined to natural ability, is surely very essential. I know, for instance, a young lady, whose vanity flattered her she possessed abilities equal to the instruction of private pupils, in which capacity she had been engaged several years; when one day I accidentally pointed out to her notice a most beautifully expressive passage in a play of Shakespear, she negligently, in her flirting way, threw the book aside, declaring, "she detested blank verse, for, to say the truth, she could neither *read* it properly, nor *comprehend* it at all." "And thou art a *governess*," said I to myself, as in disgust I snatched it from the table; while, fantastically drawing a comb from her pocket, she placed herself before the glass, and flirted it through her hair, which, with all imaginable vanity, she braided and twisted into

due form, then, drawing her chair to an inch in full view of her imagined charms, threw her listless form into a fashionable sprawl before the mirror, where the constant direction of her eye was always fixed, denoting the weakness of her untutored mind. Such was the *instructress* of *arrogance* and *folly*, the only science she had ever studied, or required perfection in, as her abilities never empowered her, with the art of instruction, superior to the common *abecedarian;* but while she could hold up her head, read a *little*, write a *little*, and dance a little, she *fancied* herself a *governess* equal to any establishment; though, as to any or all of the fine arts, she was a most perfect stranger, except that of *vanity*, in which she was an eminent proficient; and happy the pupil who escaped such instruction."

CHAP. VIII.

AT this moment a whiskey stopped at the gate, and a servant presented a card of polite inquiry from Mr. and Mrs. Henpeck, the latter of whom had taken the reins from a little snuffy ruby-nosed man, of crimson countenance; and my uncle, putting on his gold-laced nondescript hat, went out to speak to them, requesting me to follow him.

After a score of "how-d'ye-does," and shaking hands so violently, I thought they'd have either pulled my uncle into the chaise, or he pulled the little man out, "Is *that there* gentleman your *nevee*, Mr. Tweazy?"

said the lady, screwing up her eyes, and confidently peering in my face.

"Yes, that's Victor St. Alban, sure enough," replied my uncle.

"Sir," continued the lady, dragging up her yellow colloppy throat with an extra stretch, "I shall be proud to see you at my house. Mr. Henpeck, my love, why don't you tell the gentleman so: any friend of Mr. Tweazy *must* be agreeable to *you*, while they are so to *me*."

"I was just going to ask the gentleman's company," answered the man, whom necessity compelled to like every thing his wife did: "I'm sure I shall be very happy to entertain him the best in my power."

"*Our* power, my lovey, you mean: recollect, you're not a *bacheldor* now; and therefore, Mr. Henpeck, my dear, you should say *we*,"—replied Madam Xantippe.

"I stand corrected, my dear," answered her supple slave.

"No, you don't," cried my uncle; "you *sit* corrected: so, take my advice; alight a few minutes, and take a walk round my garden; I want to shew you my melon bed, and give you a little fruit."

Mr. Henpeck cast a wistful look at his rib for her *kind permission;* who instantly answered, "He must not touch fruit for the world, nor walk upon the grass for fear of cold; for Doctor Tonic had ordered him a peculiar *regiment;* and therefore, as *his wife* and *nurse*, she could not *suffer* him to get out of the chaise."

"Well, well! my love, I'll do just as you *please*, deary."

"Aye, to be sure," said Mrs. Henpeck: then drawing up her reins, she wished us good-morning; observing, she should send us a card in the

evening; and flogging up the old horse, who seemed as compliant to her lash as his master, they were soon out of sight.

"Heavens protect me," exclaimed my uncle. "See what you're to come to; prepare for Master Hymen's trammels. Poor Henpeck! I wish to God I could inspire him with a proper portion of spirit to counteract the tyranny of his despotic wife: he's a man of very genteel property, and very clever in his business; and might have died, as he lived, a happy bachelor, hadn't the *charms* (personal or mental, I cannot define which) of the fascinating Widow *Would-a-more* captivated his invulnerable heart, and vanquished all his neutral determination of leading a life of celibacy; and therefore, by the widow's persuasions, he metamorphosed himself into that

happy being he calls a husband; for, blessed with so *sweet*, so *engaging* a wife as Xantippe Henpeck, how can he be otherwise! But, however, I'll treat you with a specimen of their ways and manners, by accepting their invitation; where you will find a hospitable board, and every thing in precise style; for Mrs. Henpeck rules over every concern, from the attic to the basement; in which department her loving husband never interferes, and knows no more of his household concerns, and the *necessaries* or *unnecessaries* of his family, than he does how many feathers compose his pillow: all he has to do is to supply his wife with plenty of the *threadneedle rags*, of which she well knew there was no *want* when she condescended to bestow her hand where her *interest* best directed such a *sacrifice*,

and thereby dubbed Mr. Henpeck the *happiest of men.* But you shall judge, Victor, for yourself."

My uncle's watch now reminded us it was time to retire, and dress for Dr. Tonic's dinner party, who, dining, as he observed, at the unfashionable hour of three, did not allow us much time to adorn for conquest, as my uncle styled it; who, jocosely touching my elbow as we walked side by side up the spacious staircase to our respective dressing-rooms, observed, if I had but the happy invention of tying my neck-cloth in some peculiar mode, totally different to the rest of the world, I should be as immortalized as Shakespeare's mulberry-tree, and set the village fashion for the remainder of the year. "I'll allow you also," continued he, "to *bounce* and *stretch* a little in every point where your dis-

cretion may point out a retributive attack: you must therefore consider yourself at a masquerade, and make your consonant repartees accordingly; for, I assure you, you will find a most motley group of the "*Would-be-greats*" and the "*What-we-ares*," but not many of the "*What-we-have-beens;*" because it's not the fashion to *analyze genealogy* in the present day. Exert your energies, and let the whole squad see you're my own boy Victor, and not a mushroom raised from a dunghill by the powerful sunshine of fortune. You comprehend me, I'm sure."

We now separated, and, in about half an hour, met again, each equipped, and ready to start for our engagement.

My uncle now surveyed me from head to foot; for, having paid some attention to his wishes, I had arran-

ged my hair in a few peculiar turns, and tied my neckcloth in a very smart full rose, which I had taken no little pains to crimp up into due form, twisting the ends, in the similitude of a plat, round my neck: this, with the eccentricity of my quizzing-glass hung round my neck with a purple ribbon, and immense broad ribbons in my shoes, I stood before him, in my *own idea*, a perfect Bond-street *puppy!*

"Have I properly obeyed your orders, Sir?" asked I.

"Exactly," replied he; "you have conjured that tippy bow under your chin in curious style."

I could not forbear smiling, for my soul, at the contrast we made, as I regarded *his* neckcloth, which, in the perversity of the antique style, hung, in two dangling ends, to the bottom

of his waistcoat, which, with the addition of his gold-laced hat and ancestorial cane, equipped him in his style, which none presumed to imitate, nor did I dare reprove, wisely considering the adage of "Prithee, Tom-fool," &c.

CHAP. IX.

MY uncle now led the way, and we found ourselves very shortly close under the well-known pestle and mortar at the Doctor's shop door; where he most graciously receiving, conducted us to the dining-room; the door of which throwing wide open as the hinges would stretch, he, with a tremendous hem, hem, hem! thus announced us to a room full of company:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, my respected friend Mr. Tweazy, and his nephew, Mr. Victor St. Alban." Then advancing to a lady, who filled the pre-eminent chair, he thus suc-

cessively introduced us to the whole group:—Mr. and Mrs. Fungus, Mr. and Mrs. Prolix, Mr. and Mrs. Deposit, Mr. Faddle and the Widow Quiz, Mrs. Tonic, Miss Elizetta Tonic, Miss Georgina Tonic, and, stuck behind the door on a high stool, was perched, "My son, Bob Tonic;" who, distending his nostrils as wide as nature would permit the extent, seemed like a sagacious pointer *smelling* at fresh game, as he fixed his large black *bolus* eyes full on my face.

Reciprocal compliments having subsided, two more chairs were wedged against the wainscot, and down upon them we squeezed ourselves, like fourteen larks stuck upon a skewer for a dog-day roast, in a low ceilinged room, divided only from the effluvia of jalap and assafœtida by a thin partition, against whose antique wainscot hung specimens of the

Miss Tonics' abilities in embroidered dogs, cats, pheasants, and fruit; while the black hearth was adorned with an immense bow-pot, containing all the flowers in the parish, stuck into a large *electuary jar;* the perfume of which redundant nosegay, or the *brown jar*, I know not *which*, so horrified Mrs. Deposit, she was obliged to leave the room, conducted by Bob Tonic to the revival of the hartshorn bottle; but an old woman coming in, almost at the moment, to have a tooth drawn, Mrs. Deposit, terrified at the idea of the operation, was obliged to return to the dining-room, from whence, at her request, the blooming composition of fragrance was instantly removed; but, unfortunately, before the servant could close the door, a large tabby-cat made his *entree* with family familiarity, which so

alarmed the delicate nerves of Mrs. Fungus, that she uttered a loud shriek, which was responsively echoed by the old woman in the shop, in the agonizing wrench of extracting her decayed stump, much to the anger of the Doctor, who had deputed *Bob* to perform the business, and brushed into the shop, reprobating the patient in terms so stentorial, that they were distinctly heard through the wainscot, to the following effect:—

"What are you making such a d—d racket about—eh? Don't you know I've got a house full of company, and every window open? If I'd known you'd have been such a weak old fool as to squall out in that manner, you should have borne the pain till to-morrow, I promise you."

"How could I help it, Sir?" replied the patient: "I thought as

how Mister Bob had *scrunshed* my jaw-bone."

" 'Drot your jaw-bone!" answered the furious Doctor. " How dare you say such a thing? My son Bob's the best tooth-drawer in England; and I think, after walking the hospitals for *two* years, and extracting a *dozen* teeth from *dead bodies*, he ought to know something about it."

" To be sure, Sir," said the woman: " but then, Sir, you know as how as dead bodies could not *feel*, by reason of which they could not *scream!*"

The Doctor was silent; for the woman's argument was not to be refuted. " Pay your shilling, and go about your business: my son Bob's got something better to do than stand bothering here all day."—The woman obeyed the command; the shop door

slammed to; and the Doctor returned to the company, who jocosely rallied him about scolding his patient so inconsistently.

"She'd no business to scream," said the Doctor.

"She'd a *right* to scream," replied my uncle: "she felt excruciating pain, if you didn't; and, therefore, how could she help it?"

"Bob drew it as easy as an old shoe," continued the Doctor.

"So he might," said my uncle; "but he did not *feel* the agony."

"No, to be sure," cried Mr. Prolix. "My poor girl, Lavinia, had a tooth extracted not a week ago; and, egad! Sirs, she screamed, that you might have heard her at the extremity of the village."

"Oh! I don't wonder at that," said my uncle: "your children are

famous screamers: they never do any thing else, I think—at least, when I'm in your house."

Mr. Prolix was dumb; his cherubic wainscot cheeks mantled brick-dust; while resentment for the stigma passed on his squalling children glanced from his eye. His wife was a pleasant, well-behaved, quiet soul; of the automaton breed; and as much the reverse, in her principles, of Mrs. Henpeck, as it was possible for a human creature to be; for she was a composition of humility, and obedience to the commands of her husband.—Not so was Mrs. Deposit: she was the most fantastic woman upon earth, except her neighbour, Mrs. Fungus; who, for family arrogance, could match the proudest of the proud. She assured the Miss Tonics, in lisping accents, most dulcet and affected, she intended giv-

ing a little sort of fête champetre in the course of a fortnight, for which she should issue her cards in time. "And you, my dear Mrs. Deposit, will join our festive group;" and she patted her fan most lovingly on Mrs. Deposit's *naked* fat shoulder, exposed à la Venus.

"Oh! my dear creature, I shall certainly attend you, with rapture," replied the stylish compeer: "you know a dance or a rubber is my delig'"; How much, now, d'ye think I made by my card purse last season?"

"Can't guess, poz," said Mrs. Fungus: "a rolio of fifty guineas, perhaps."

"Fifty!" reiterated Mrs. Deposit: "why, my dear soul, fifty guineas would scarce buy me a purse:" then, in an audible whisper, half a yard from Mrs. Fungus's naked ear,

"I netted *two hundred* clear, 'pon honour."

"Oh! you lucky soul," exclaimed Mrs. Fungus. "But does not your lord sometimes reprove?"

"Oh! he knows nothing of the matter," replied Mrs. Deposit. "We are a very fashionable couple: we each pursue the mode most agreeable to our wishes; restriction would not suit me, I promise you. Deposit's a good fellow: he never reproves me; and, in fact, if he *did*, it would little *avail*."

During this confab, my uncle (whose chair joined Mrs. Deposit's) had fixed his chin upon his cane, and puffed out his cheeks, with his eyes fixed on the carpet, in deep attention, and panic-struck at the lady's conversation, till, from the cast of his countenance, I dreaded every moment would produce one of his sharp

opinions, not couched in the politest terms; but the servant announcing "dinner on table," created the general bustle of a removal to the smoaking board, where a profuse spreadation of substantials, in the old English style, formed a copious fumigation from fish, flesh, fowl, and pudding; over which, at the bottom of the table, stood the Doctor, bolt upright, flourishing a tremendous carving-knife with as much dexterity as he would a lancet; and the ceremony of grace having been audibly repeated by *son Bob*, who took the Doctor's right hand as extra officiating carver, we all took our allotted seats.

An immense cod's tail at the *top* of the table, and a much larger *head and shoulders* at the *bottom*, almost suffocated poor Mrs. Deposit, who declined partaking any portion of it,

protesting, " the last *cod's scull* and smelts she purchased at Phillip's, in Bond-street, cost her two guineas, and though the price was, to be sure, very exorbitant, it did not prove good.

" Two guineas for a cod's scull," exclaimed my incredulous uncle: " in my opinion, there was not a scull in Bond-street worth a quarter part the money. Eh! Doctor, what say you? you understand sculls."

" Oh heavens!" ejaculated Mrs. Fungus; " what a horrid subject to start at a medical table. My dear Mr. Tweazy, pray, forbear. Do you know, I was extravagant enough to give a *guinea* for a *lobster* to a celebrated fishmonger in my neighbourhood, last March, for turbot sauce, at one of my city dinner parties?"

" The more's the pity, Ma'am," said my uncle: " I'm very sorry you

female caterers should encourage extortion to such a pitch: the guinea would have done more good to some distressed family."

"Pugh!" cried Mrs. Fungus. "Was *my* turbot to be served without sauce, for such a *paltry* consideration? No, indeed, by no means!"

"But time has been, Madam," rejoined my uncle, "when *you* and *I* have bought many a lobster for a *groat;* aye, and when the humble bread and cheese we could set before our guests wanted no other sauce than a cordial welcome to the board of frugality."

"Bread and cheese!" reiterated Mrs. Deposit. "Dear Mr. Tweazy, what a *carpenter's supper* you have selected: I declare you quite horrify my delicacy. Stilton or Parmesan sandwiches are extreme bores to introduce, even on the sideboard of a

fashionable table, merely for the purpose of flavouring the spruce and soda; but *common bread* and *cheese* —oh! shocking! too terrible to think about!"

Mrs. Tonic now interrupted this interesting dissertation, by holding out, at arm's length, a plated fish-slice full of the *woolly* flakes of the aforementioned dish, which everybody who knew where the prime part was stationed declined accepting, and she was therefore compelled to munch it herself; while her helpmate was plentifully distributing the jowl and jelly pieces to the epicures; amongst whom the Widow Quiz's plate was first handed, with *profound homage*, by Mr. Prolix, who had made her *will* only the day before, and well knew all the preliminaries it contained, both in his favour and the Doctor's.

The plate was now presented; and willing to gratify the high epicurean palate of the rich widow, he poked his wrinkled eyelids close over the dish, to select a boubouche, exclaiming, "Cod sounds, Madam! here's a nice piece in reserve for you."

"My dear, my dear," cried Mrs. Tonic (not comprehending what he said), "how you do swear!"

"I swear!" replied the Doctor (as son Bob set up a horse-laugh at his mother's mistake and expense). "Why, my dear Mrs. Tonic, you must be out of your mind: I was only helping Mrs. Quiz to part of the sound."

Poor Mrs. Tonic's cheek flushed with confusion, and, being a placid woman of the *old school*, she made no reply; and the dinner went quietly down, as most dinners do, that are composed *only* of eatables, not set

out on the nicknack scale of notoriety.

"Come, take a triffle with my daughter Elizetta," said the doctor, slapping me on the shoulder: "don't be afraid of her; she's a Tonic, depend upon it."

I now, for the first time, discovered who this young lady was, and concluded I was to be indebted to her abilities for the harmonic strains I had been taught to expect, though, from her personal charms, I could draw no comparative idea.

She was very short in stature, extremely scraggy, with a complexion à la *Bantam egg*, viz. similar to a composition of *bark* and *bole ammoniac*, like my grandmother's tooth-powder; her eyes, like brother Bobby's, were black and goggling; and if they were the telegraphs of her heart, it was a very inanimate one,

insipid as a chalk draught, or gruel without salt. Her sister was the polygraph of herself; therefore no farther personal comment is requisite. They were both attentive and assiduous to the company, and, no doubt, might be two good sort of girls, fit to make industrious farmers' wives; but neither of them were destined to captivate Victor St. Alban.

"What a charming name yours is!" said Mrs. Deposit, looking most languishingly in my face. I bowed.

"Aye, that was my choice," replied my uncle.

"Then much merit is due to your choice, Sir," lisped Mrs. Fungus. "What a divine name it would be for a *novel*. If you do but subjoin it with one equally as elegant, how beautifully romantic it will sound: *Palmira*, for instance, crowning her

Victor with a wreath of never-fading happiness."

Here Mrs. Fungus set up a loud titter, which was succeeded by a universal simper, from a smile to a horse-laugh, from everybody but my uncle, who, aware of these quizzing impertinents, replied very gravely, "He believed there were many hearts that would yield to such a Victor, without much contention, from *bold fifteen* to *bolder fifty!*"

"Heavens! what an opinion you must have of women," exclaimed Mrs. Deposit, who loved to hear herself talk as much as her husband, when he delivers elaborate encomiums from his knock-me-down pulpit of public extortion.

"I entertain the best opinion in the world of all women," rejoined my uncle; "for I estimate every one according to their principles and ac-

tions: my opinion, therefore, never swerving from *truth*, cannot possibly be a *bad one*."

"But *bold fifteen* to *bolder fifty!*" cried Mrs. Fungus (who snatched the shuttlecock of argument from her voluble friend, Mrs. Deposit, to aim it at my uncle). "What do you mean to *infer* by that, Mr. Tweazy?"

"Precisely what I have said, Madam; for, with all due deference to the present circle of exemptions, I am sorry to say, in the present day, the levity of the girl of fifteeen is, if possible, exceeded by the matron of fifty, *married* or *single*."

Mrs. Fungus bit her lip; Mrs. Deposit sat upon a thorn; while the mild Mrs. Prolix ventured to give her humble opinion, "that certainly the principles of the *rising* generation were very notorious: subordination had been her cradle motto; but the

word, and its practical properties, were now both expelled."

"My dear, you talk like an old woman preaching morality over her knitting-pins," said Mr. Prolix. "If you are all perfection yourself, depend upon it your system of propriety won't reform the stylish *ungovernables* of the day. You forget you have got a parson at your elbow. Eh! Mr. Faddle, now my wife has furnished the text, you can treat us with the sermon, I'm sure."

"No sermon! no sermon!" cried the Doctor: "let's swallow the subject in a mouthful of plum-pudding."

"No bad idea," replied my uncle: "I've heard many a sermon styled a '*plum-pudding discourse.*'"

"What profanity!" exclaimed the Widow Quiz (who was wiping her wine-glass with her cambric pocket-handkerchief, for fear a grain of dust

should contaminate her puckered lip). "Pray, can I be indulged with a glass of *clean* water?"

"I should hope so," replied the Doctor, "if some witch has not muddled the pump."

"Oh! the Doctor takes care of the *aqua-fontani*," observed Mr. Faddle, offering his snuff-box to the widow, who smirked very cordially at the young man's civility, dearly loving all possible *homage* and respect, as due to her supposed consequence, having consigned her virgin hand, in her *fortieth* year, to a husband, over whose ashes she now rattled the wheels of her chariot in sovereign independence; which vehicle, when travelling, she converted to a *chandler's shop*, by furnishing it even with a *cag* of *water*, that she might not be poisoned by stagnant pools: she carried, also, every article of provision;

nor did she even omit her sheets and rush-lights, none possibly being so good as her *own*. To this eccentric woman the Tonic family paid high respect; and whenever she honoured them with a visit, the head seat and best pieces were at her command.

CHAP. X.

A PLATE of pudding was now handed to Mr. Faddle, who audibly assured the company, "he could furnish a most excellent *receipt* for one, upon a very economic plan."

"I never heard of a parson making a plum-pudding before," said my uncle: "they should never cook any thing but sermons. Why, your Reverence, I'm shocked; you would not convert a pulpit-cloth into a pudding-bag, I hope."

This speech, though uttered with much gravity, caused a hearty laugh at the coddling parson's expense, which seemed to nettle him, though

he did not retort. The cloth was soon after removed, and the desert made its appearance; but as it was not in the Bond-street style, Mrs. Deposit could touch nothing but a *prime* nectarine; observing, the whole time she was in London last summer, "she lived upon *ice* and *peaches!*"

"And, pray, Madam," said my uncle, very gravely, "what may you live upon in the winter?"

"*Turtle* and *chantillies!*" returned the lady.

"And, pray, what may a chantilly be?" asked my uncle.

"La! my dear Sir, don't you know what it is? 'Pon honour, you country folks—excuse me—vegetate like cabbages! He, he, he!"

"Cabbages! Madam," retorted my enraged uncle. "I beg an explanation of that opprobrious sarcasm. I believe your town residence is not far

from the *cabbage repository;* therefore, please to explain, Madam: I shall thank you for the intelligence."

"Why, then, Sir," answered Mrs. Deposit (much piqued at the retort of the *cabbage repository),* "do you not vegetate, more and more like a cabbage, every day of your life? Do you not grow "*white-headed* and *hard-hearted!*"—eh! Mr. Tweazy?"

Ha, ha, ha! resounded from the bottom of the table in one united peal of rough merriment, till interrupted by the Divine, Mr. Faddle, who requested an explanation of the chantilly.

"Why, Sir," replied Mrs. Deposit, suppressing a smile, "I really cannot give you the express *receipt;*" and she winked sarcastically at the Doctor: "but a chantilly is a kind of a sort of a delicious olio, the centre ornament of every stylish table,

composed of cakes, whipt cream, sweetmeats, and so forth, served in a ratifia basket, with barley-sugar ormoulu, lion's claws supporting its elegant fabric. It's a very pretty French kickshaw invention, if *we* could but keep it *ourselves;* but, really, it is becoming so *common* a dish at your *city gorges,* that it is now nearly expelled from the western galas, I do assure you."

The Widow Quiz observed, "it must be a very extravagant dish."

"La! that's nothing!" replied Mrs. Deposit. "I would not give a rush to sit down to a dinner without the table-decker's tablet of information, to instruct me, that a dolphin was a disguised tongue, or a beautiful tortoise was nothing more than a ragoued pigeon; a dish of blamonge converted into a pack of cards; with a fierce-looking hedgehog, composed of

cake and custard! Oh! there's nothing like *dashing* and *flashing!*"

"Yes, yes!" cried my uncle; "you're right, Madam. *Dash* into Hyde Park one day, and *dash* into the *Gazette* the next! that's high ton with the new *flash-in-pan* societies, I understand."

"True," replied Mrs. Deposit, very composedly; "such are the *casualties* of *fashion:* but I don't comprehend what you call the 'flash-in-pan societies.'"

"I mean," replied my uncle, "the nightly card parties, formed of *young tradesmen*, who, neglecting all duties, moral and divine, leave an innocent, wretched young *wife* of *eighteen*, to weep, alone, a husband's destructive follies over the cradle of her hapless progeny, till day-light dawns upon her tearful eye, and sends the ruined gamester to his thorny pillow, where

love and fond fidelity have lost their charms, and every place, save *home*, affords him pleasure. Such is the *minor* husband, the mere married *boy*, rushing, with incautious step, to ruin's brink, and cruelly involving in his fate the innocent and virtuous victim of his *fancied* happiness."

"Oh! but that's nothing extraordinary, Sir," cried Mrs. Deposit. "Man and wife, now-a-days, a'n't like lock and key, that the one can't move without the other. Why, Deposit and I are the most fashionable couple imaginable: we never intrude on each other's pleasures: he has his card parties, I mine: he mounts his hunter, and dashes in the Ride; I pop into Lady Lounge's barouche, and sport myself in the Drive every Sunday; I don't put on my cottage clumps, and, *glueing* myself upon *hubby's* arm, content myself with *fag-*

ging through the plebeian pedestrian throng. La! we should both be the most wretched creatures living. Shouldn't we, George?"

"Precisely so, my love," replied the non-chalante *husband of fashion.* "The system we married on was a total independence of principle; for, as we had both arrived at the years of discretion, we each resolved to pursue the plan most consonant to our wishes; and, I flatter myself, we are as *fond* and happy a couple——"

"As any *fashionable* couple possibly can be," interrupted my uncle, whose irritated temper would not permit Mr. Deposit the privilege of finishing his flourishing sentence.

"Why, my dear Mrs. Tonic," hemm'd the Doctor, "I'm afraid you and I must go to school again; for these are lessons we have never learnt or practised."

"Then, I'm sure, my dear, we are too old to learn now; and, therefore, I beg to remain in my happy ignorance," said Mrs. Tonic.

"Well, well! hem, hem! agreed, old woman, agreed!"

The conversation now became vapid; and the ladies soon after withdrew into the garden, for a walk and a gossip; Mrs. Tonic not being blessed with a drawing-room, and the sun having darted its most fervent ray of excessive power on the parlour they were first received in. Mrs. Deposit and Mrs. Fungus both declared the heat would annihilate them; and they, in consequence, made what they termed a gipsey party, under a cherry-tree; where, seated on the grass, they retailed envy, hatred, and malice, from the grain to the pound, without the assistance of the shop scales, as most other female country

parties do, who have little else to employ them; for, be it known to my readers, Mrs. Deposit and Mrs. Fungus were mere temporary inhabitants of the village, who condescended to rusticate themselves for three months in a cottage ornée, to recruit the excesses of winter balls and galas, "by gleaning," as Mrs. Fungus elegantly styled it, "the roses of health, to adorn the vulgar day-light complexion that the summer's glaring sun exposed to the eye of scrutiny, till the less glaring beam of pink wax scented lights suffered the fascinating convenient Christmas bloom to be substituted, undetected."

This cogent reason, subjoined to a few provoking pimples, induced these ladies to seclude themselves in durance vile, living upon physic and water-gruel, of which self-vanity induced them to swallow many po-

tions; while their respective husbands honoured the rural residence with their company as often as business or *inclination* permitted; Mr. Fungus being in the speculative line, and Mr. Deposit constantly engaged in his pulpit, *hammering* his elaborate discourse into the ears of his auditors, congregated round him to buy bargains at his tonish repository.

CHAP. XI.

VARIOUS were the topics in the drinking parlour, and many the bets made between the Doctor and his convivial companions; for no man loved an argument better; till the "briskly-circling glass" had elated them in full flow of spirits; when the coffee mandate from the ladies, re-assembled in the dining-room, summoned them to adjourn to the whist table, where Mrs. Deposit had already placed herself, and was impatiently shuffling the cards in most dextrous style, and displaying a splendid purse of guineas, four of

which lay at her elbow, as scorers, with as much indifference, on her part, as if they had been four dumps; while the Widow Quiz, who was classed as her compeer, picked four silver *twopences* out of her old family crimson silk purse, and, drawing up her head, she sat leering about her in full state; till the Doctor and Mr. Prolix took the opponent seats, the latter of whom drew Mrs. Deposit, and the former the Widow Quiz.

Now the Widow played a very *sharp* game, and the Doctor a *deep* one; but, with all their ingenuity, they could neither vanquish the lawyer nor the gamestress, in whose favour the run of luck was perfectly magical.

The Doctor swore, crossed his legs, uncrossed them, swung his chair, but all to no purpose; the

Widow turned her little conjuring coins, shuffled the cards in every direction, and execrated the whole pack; while the successful lawyer, and his fortunate partner, netted all the shillings and half-crowns that came in their way; while Mrs. Fungus and Mr. Deposit, *versus* Parson Faddle and Mrs. Tonic, experienced the same provoking fate, much to the dismay of Mrs. Fungus, who could never keep her temper in due subordination on those *trying* occasions.

Matters being thus arranged, the rest of the company wished to play a round game; which my uncle proposed should be Loo, and accordingly took his seat by the side of the placid Mrs. Prolix, the Misses Tonic, myself, and Mr. Bob Tonic, who had scarce dealt the cards, when the

door opened, and a lady made her entrée, whom Bob thus addressed:—

"What! you're come at last, Maria; we expected you to tea."

The Doctor, hearing the name of Maria, jumped up, while his opponents were dealing; and advancing to our table, "Mr. St. Alban," said he, "I must introduce my son's wife. This, Sir, is Mrs. Bob Tonic; as good a little woman as ever lived. Nay, don't blush, child. How's the boy to-night?"

"Very poorly, Sir; which has been the reason of my delay," answered Mrs. Bob.

"Well, well, child! never mind; you would marry, and so you must take a mother's care." He then gave her a loving nip of the cheek, and returned to his game.

"Come, sit down, sit down!" cried her boorish husband; "don't

make a fuss; I expected you two hours ago!"

"I dare say, you did, my love; but I could not leave the child."

"Pshaw! why the d—l didn't you give him the poppy syrup, and set him to sleep?"

"So I did, my dear; but it took the contrary effect," cried the subordinate wife.

"Poh d—n it! it's all want of management, because *I* wasn't at home."

The crimson of reprehension so unmerited flushed Mrs. Tonic's cheek; and a tear of vexation started in her eye, which added expression to its natural lustre.

"Never mind, Madam," exclaimed my uncle; "you are all in good time, and we are all happy to see you, early or late: you have been performing that duty which so emi-

nently distinguishes the character of a mother, and adorns it with that lustre no ostrich parent can tarnish."

The little smiling woman, whose countenance was the express image of good-nature, thanked him for his polite compliment.

"Halloo! there, Squire!" cried Doctor Tonic: "why, you'll make my son Bob jealous. We shall have a duel, or a crim. con. Ha, ha, ha!"

"What pretty speech were you making about *ostrich parents*, Mr. Tweazy?" said Mrs. Fungus. "It's an idea many an embarrassed author would thank you for."

"I want neither authors nor critics to pass judgment on my sentiments, Madam," replied my uncle. "I dare say, Madam, you, who live

in the region of literary information, can be at no loss to know, that an ostrich leaves the protection of its young to Providence; that the egg is hatched by the sun on the seashore, where the parent bird abandons it to its fate. Just so, the mother, who, resigning her infant offspring to the care of nurses, dandles it on the lap of starvation and extortion; till, falling a prey to neglect and cruelty, the hapless blossom withers in the shade of oblivion, because its *ostrich mother* is too fantastic to trouble herself about it."

"A very stylish description, upon my word," answered Mrs. Tonic.

"Well! if I should ever be plagued with a child," cried Mrs. Deposit, "I shall certainly apply to Mr. Tweazy for a lecture on maternal duties."

"And you shall be heartily welcome, Madam, to as long or short a dissertation as you think proper," replied my uncle.

"Sir!" cried the shopman (popping in his head, the express image of a scull on a mop-stick); "Sir! Mrs. Drinkwater wants your attendance immediately."

"Poh! fool. Why didn't you say I was out?"

"Why, Sir," resumed the man (as he hung his whole weight on the creaking lock of the door, whose hinges kept up a wee-war unison), "I didn't know I was to say that in a life or death case."

"How's that! how's that!" said the Doctor, throwing down his cards.

"Why, Mrs. Drinkwater's very bad, Sir; and the lawyer's at her

bed-side, making her will; and he can't go on without you."

"What, what, what! not go on without me! Oh, oh! I'll take a good stiff cordial in my pocket, and be off, if that's the case."

"Aye, do," said my uncle: "it may *operate* in your *favour*."

"Take my cards, then—will you?" answered the Doctor; who, snatching up his hat, rushed into the shop to the cordial bottle the old lady best loved, furnished himself with a proper dose, and, mounting his horse, galloped away from his bad luck to what he hoped would prove better; and my uncle, in consequence, finished his rubber."

As the Doctor closed the door, Mr. Prolix expressed his astonishment, that Mrs. Drinkwater should not have employed his superior abili-

ties on the important occasion; while Mrs. Fungus longed to know who would be the heir.

"We shall know all about it when the Doctor comes back," said Mrs. Deposit.

"The Doctor must be as dumb as a dumpling," cried Mr. Prolix: "he must be very careful how he tells tales out of school."

"Unless he whispers them, in confidence, to you," replied Mrs. Fungus.

"If the house and furniture are to be sold," said Mr. Deposit, "I should like to speculate, and conduct the business, I must confess."

"But you'll stop, with proper decency, till the woman's dead, I hope," said my uncle; "or d'ye mean to go to-morrow morning, and

make a live bargain for the job, whenever the casualty may take place?"

A general laugh silenced the disconcerted projector; and Mrs. Fungus very snappishly requested he would attend to his cards, as she was losing a little estate, which, if luck did not take a turn, she should be compelled to mortgage.

The cards now flew briskly round; and Mrs. Bob Tonic's lap was like Dame Fortune's cornucopia, for she absolutely cleared every pool; while poor Mrs. Prolix bore her disappointment very composedly and patiently. Not so the Misses Tonic, who snapt and pouted their negro lips, and gave themselves most unwarrantable airs, to which the patient and meek sister-in-law seemed to pay no attention, probably from

the system being *habitually* adopted; for affection or respect to her superiority seemed quite out of the question.

CHAP. XII.

AN hour had elapsed, when the Doctor's horse gallopped up to the door; and, in two minutes after he had taken off his boots, he entered the room.

"Well! Doctor, what news? Is she dead? How stands the will? Were you in time? May we congratulate you? Has the cordial had any effect?"—reiterated from every lip, till they fairly stunned the poor Doctor; who, hemming very loud, demanded silence, to answer their profuse inquiries.

He then deliberately drew his chair, and prefaced the recital by assuring them Mrs. Drinkwater was not dead. "She called me to her bed-side," continued the Doctor, "to request I would sign her will; which I instantly refused, stating, if I was a witness, of course my name was not in the will; a circumstance which nettled me most devilishly, you must know."

"Of course," cried everybody; and the Doctor thus went on; while his auditors, and particularly his own young cormorants, sat, with open mouths and attentive ears, to catch the sequel:—

"Well, Sirs, the lawyer presented me the pen and ink, which, like a man of spirit, I inflexibly pushed away, positively declaring I would not sign any thing to my own disad-

vantage, having flattered myself, as an old friend, I should have been *handsomely* remembered."

"My dear Doctor," said Mrs. Drinkwater, "don't mistake my request; for, though your name is not down, I have taken care of your family: I have left all your children a *plum-cake* a-piece."

"Oh! very well, Madam," said I; "if you have done that, I'm satisfied. With that, I seized the pen, and affixed my sign manual at the oven's mouth; for what *sized* cake it will produce, I know not. So there's an end of the concern; and my boys and girls will reap the harvest their father ploughed."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mrs. Tonic, on whose features sat the shade of disappointment: "I confess I'm surprised at her conduct."

" I hope there's plenty of plums in the cake, however," said Bob Tonic, with an unintelligent grin.

" Few or many," replied the Doctor, " you'll take your chance: her old fool of a husband served me the same trick—in fact, worse; for he only left me a ring. Egad! I've kept her alive, by art, these seven years."

" Yes; your happy medical art, subjoined to the power of her head physician, the brandy bottle," said Mr. Prolix, sneeringly, who felt he was five guineas out of pocket by the job. " Are you sure," continued he, " she was compos?".

" That's no look-out of mine," said the Doctor; " I only know I'm d—d mad."

" Then you know nothing of the tenor of the will?" asked Mr. Deposit.

"Not I! I don't care a fig about it. If she sends for me any more, Bob shall go; he's *paid* for it: I won't go, by G—d!"

"Blessed is he who never expects, for he shall never be disappointed," exclaimed Parson Faddle.

"Amen," ejaculated Bob Tonic, bursting into a laugh at his own sagacity.

"Well," cried the Widow Quiz (primming her mouth, and shoving her elbows into her sides, as she drew up her head); "I wonder whether she has *cut off* the *entail* of her estate."

"She may cut off her head, for what I care," replied the Doctor. 'But come, good folks; if your cards are over, we'll adjourn to supper; where, if we don't find plum-cakes, we must content ourselves with bread and cheese."

We now followed, en train, to a table of cold relics: but as there was no *chantilly*, Mistresses Deposit and Fungus declined eating what they privately termed *kitchen scraps*, which the derisive contraction of their noses most perfectly evinced. The Doctor made a stiff bowl of punch, at which he was a famous hand; and Miss Elizetta treated us, after supper (at her papa's request), with the "Beautiful Maid," whom she completely murdered, for no screech-owlet ever quivered or shrieked more unmusical. My uncle fixed his eyes on me; and I very prudently cast mine on the table, till the hooting scream finished.

"Bravo! bravo!" thundered the Doctor, rapping the table with his knuckles; while Mr. Deposit responded with the foot of his wine-

glass, with as much dexterity as if it had been his own pulpit hammer.

"Did you ever hear Braham sing that delightful song, Miss Tonic?" asked Mrs. Deposit, winking at Mrs. Fungus.

"No, Ma'am; I never heard *nobody* sing it," answered the bronze songstress.

"I suppose not, my dear," replied Mrs. Deposit, bursting into a rude laugh. "But that was not exactly the question I asked; because, of course, *nobody never* could sing *nothing nowhere;* but *somebody*, blessed with the enchanting powers of a Braham, might sing *anywhere.*"

"True," said the Doctor (who was neither aware of the exposure of his daughter's oratory by the sarcastic lip of Mrs. Deposit, nor of Miss Elizetta's self-conviction of false gram-

mar), "true; but my daughter's are all *pure wild notes;* therefore, I say, the greater the merit. What think you, Mr. Victor?"

"I agree with you, that *some* wild notes are exquisitely melodious, Sir," returned I.

"Can't you tip us a stave, Victor?" asked my uncle. "They tell me you were always a devotee at the Oxford Music Meetings. It's my opinion, you're like the monkeys—know more than you think proper to own. Come, strike up; I challenge you. If I could sing, I'd set you the example."

Recollecting my uncle's injunction, to *dash*, I instantly complied, and, to the best of my abilities, sang "Beware of Love;" for which I received a thunder of applause from Mrs. Deposit, who discovered I was well vers-

ed in the science of music. "Why, my dear Sir," said she, "you are positively the Apollo of the village: you frequent the Opera, I'll be bound."

I confessed it an amusement of which I was extravagantly fond.

"I thought so, I declare," continued the voluble lady; "and, I dare say, you are a frequenter of that fashionable lounge, the "*Odechorologean*," the "*Musederian*," &c.

"I am, Madam, an occasional visitor."

"Oh, oh!" said Mrs. Fungus, "I find you're a very dashing young man: I shall send you a card for my fête, addressed to Apollo Victor St. Alban, Esq.—hey!"

"Omit the first and last title, Madam," said I; "and I'll answer to the rest, according to the wishes of

my uncle, and the record of the parish register."

"You see what we Londoners can do, Doctor," cried my uncle. "Ah! London's the mart of science, the school of manners; it's the only place worth living in."

"There I beg leave to differ," said Widow Quiz: "I think London's the school of vice—a nasty, dirty, smoky place—full of bad people—all extravagance and extortion."

"Then you don't allow there are any bad people in the country," replied my uncle; "or that, while a great hulking clodpole is swinging on a gate, and chewing fat bacon, he can possibly be brooding mischief, on the score of a *blight monopoly* in his corn, and a *dearth monopoly* of his cattle! No, no; let a countryman alone for that: though a fool in

form and manners, he's a knave in principle. And what else can you expect from an uncivilized being, bred up amongst sticks, stones, and the beasts of the field—a mere living composition of pork and cabbage—just human, and that's all?".

"And, pray, what's better than good wholesome pork and cabbage, Sir?" resumed the Widow. "If you lived with me, you'd have pork and cabbage, *cold*, for breakfast; cabbage and pork, *hot*, for dinner, by way of change; and cold pork and cabbage for supper, all the year round; with the exception of stone dumplings and harvest puddings."

"I thank you, Madam, for your bill of fare," said my uncle; "but it would not suit my appetite."

"No, I believe not," replied the Doctor. "However, we thank you

for your portrait of a country man. You're a very severe genius, upon my word. We must mind what we're about."

"Oh! I don't mind being quizzed for a satirical crab, I assure you: I speak the plain, honest, home truth: I can nip as sharp as your blisters; aye, make as sore a place, occasionally," retorted my uncle.

At this moment Mrs. Fungus's little lacquey-boy was announced, with his mistress's clogs and lantern; and Mrs. Prolix's girl-maid brought her mistress's umbrella. This intelligence dissolved the party. The Widow Quiz retired to the Doctor's best *check* bed; and my uncle, self, and Parson Faddle, found our way home in the dark; while the fantastic Mrs. Deposit condescended to follow her dear neighbour Fungus's

"*glow-worm*," as she styled it; her family *scout* being left in London to sweep out the auction-room. And thus finished our visit.

CHAP. XIII.

" WELL, Victor," cried my uncle, as we entered the parlour, " how stands your heart? You have not left it behind you, I hope, with the " Beautiful Maid."

" No, on my honour, Sir, it's perfectly safe," replied I.

" And if it had been entrapped, I suppose you would not have had candour enough to acknowledge it—hey!"

" Indeed, I would, Sir: I always estimate the truth too highly to disgrace it," answered I.

"Have a care, my boy, I don't try the reality of that profession some day, when you least suspect it."

"I'll give you leave, Sir," resumed I; "for, I trust, the person who ensnares my heart, captivates it, or whatever you please to term it, will never disgrace my choice, or your consequence."

"Time will prove it, Victor! Good-night; pleasant dreams. In the morning, we'll talk over the visit we have made. We are engaged, to-morrow, at Mr. Macfriz's; where we shall have plenty of subject matter to amuse us: but, you'll remember, you must not raise your ideas above par; we shall be in the mediocrity squad, and, therefore, suit our manners to our company. You'll not have Mrs. *Calypso* Deposit at your elbow, Master Telemachus; old Mentor knows

better than to train his pupil in the den of a hyena: we go none to her cottage: you don't want a microscope to inspect the motives of her crocodilic civility, I'll be bound."

"Oh, no! I'd rather view them through a telescope," said I.

My uncle had now reached his chamber door, and we parted for the night.

The next morning, while we were taking breakfast, another invitation card made its appearance from Mrs. Henpeck, requesting our company to dinner the following day.

"Egad! we shall live cheap," exclaimed my uncle: our parties flow in so fast, that our own bread and cheese will grow mouldy. But, I suppose, I must give a grand gala in return; and you can assist in the duties of the table, by *anchovyising the apple-dumpling*."

"My dear Sir," said I, "I feel the heat of one this moment on my cheek; the convictive crimson of which must, I'm sure, be evident proof."

"Why, you do look *cherry-cheeked*," rejoined he.

"There, again, Sir, I feel a retort," not forgetting the espalier and the pane of glass, thought I.

"A truce, a truce, to old grievances!" cried my uncle. "Before I answer Mrs. Henpeck's cards, I want your opinion of our companions last night. In the first instance, what think you of Mrs. Deposit?"

"A complete woman of the world, whose husband ought to correct her vices, and improve his own virtues, however slender."

"You're right! she's the weakest of mortals, a composition of vanity and extravagance, and, by aping her superiors, renders herself truly ludi-

crous and disgusting, which her manners and converse must have evinced. But what say you of Mrs. Fungus?"

"I think her the counterpart of her neighbour Deposit, extremely affected, self-consequential, and a countenance so replete with disdain, as to induce one to devote one's attention to some more smiling and fascinating object."

"But do you know the reason o this lately assumed arrogance?" rejoined my uncle.

"Reason can never justify arrogance, Sir."

"But what reason could *not* effect, fortune has," replied my uncle; "for a legacy of two thousand pounds, left her by a distant relative, has so elevated her consequence, that the power of gold acted like electricity: it impaired her eye-sight, whenever she met an old friend in the street

(though a hundred times her superior); it caused a defalcation of memory, so great, she forgot her best and real friends, and, in a very short time, she *forgot herself* completely. She furnished a fashionable city drawing-room; oh! how superior to her former smoky parlour, decked with markettings, a littering cradle containing a squalling baby, a clothes-horse of *wet linen*, and a basket of *ragged stockings*, *baby's etceteras*, and other family *repairs;* in which style Mrs. Fungus *mucked* on, and *entertained* her friends, en famille; though, were such things now whispered in her ear, it would horrify her gentility. Her husband, as times go, is a phœnix, and never contradicts her extravagant whims; because his deary's *legacy* has *raised* him from *obscurity*, and made him a common-councilman, strutting, at a

Guildhall dinner, by the side of his white and gold wife; while Miss Minerva Fungus, mama's little image and darling pet, is bringing up, under her intuitive wing, a rival goddess: she reads with the fluency and emphasis of a Siddons, recites theatrical speeches with the grace and action of a Roscius, sings à la Catalani, dances like Angeolini; in short, if you heard Mrs. Fungus's description of her little daughter's accomplishments, you have only to add to the panegyric, by informing the world, she owes all her abilities to the *instructions* of her mama. We shall, no doubt, be invited to her fête; and then you will see how to *dash*, when your old uncle leaves you a *brace* of thousands."

"I hope I shall expend them consistently," said I.

"If you don't, it will make no odds to me: I sha'n't be alive to witness your folly; you'll feel its effects, not me, my boy," said my uncle, as he sipped his cocoa.

We hadn't cleared the table many minutes, before our regular morning visitor, the Doctor, popp'd in.

"How d'ye do? Have you heard the news? Miss Fitzclarence is arrived at the Rectory. By G—d, she's the loveliest girl in England, a perfect Venus, beautiful as an angel, meek as a dove, and as rich in mind as in pocket, I don't doubt."

"Heyday! heyday!" cried my uncle. "Why, Doctor, you're an enthusiast. Zounds! I must take care of Victor."

"Ah! I wish I'd a son with an unengaged heart," resumed the Doctor; "I'd break every bone in his

body, I'd kick the rascal out of doors, if he did not make himself *agreeable* to such a woman."

"But that might not be in his power, perhaps," said my uncle.

"Why, indeed, if she looked for beauty, we might fall short in that essential, to be sure."

"Perhaps, also," continued my uncle, "she might require equal sensibility, and equal or superior fortune. What then, Doctor—hey? how would you come on thereabouts?"

"Oh! perseverance, perseverance, is every thing with a woman! *coax* first, *bluster* afterwards, and then rouse their energies by *talking* of pistols, swords, ropes, or poison; and that settles the business."

"Without making *use* of either," interrupted my uncle. "A very pretty mode of making love à la To-

nic. You've the *family receipt*, I suppose; so that you could prepare the prescription for Victor, if it should be necessary. We'll try the effect to-morrow morning, when the young lady's a little more settled."

"Oh! Markwell's family's in high bustle, I assure you. There's half a cart-load of goods at the door; there's a fine gold harp, a beautiful piano, a most elegant work-table, a large portfolio, of drawings I suppose, with a curious writing-desk, and three large trunks of apparel. Such a bustle! they were running about like scalded magpies!"

"Then how could you think of intruding in such a busy moment?" said my uncle.

"Curiosity impelled me, and I could not resist the temptation."

"Temptation!" echoed my uncle: "what have such old fellows as you

and I to do with temptation? The very idea ought to be tartar emetic to you."

"Well; we shall hear your opinion of her," continued the Doctor.

"And it shall be an impartial one, depend upon it; not founded on the basis of momentary curiosity," said my uncle. "Why, Mrs. Deposit and Mrs. Fungus will go crazy."

"I'm just going to call on the identical ladies, to impart the news," rejoined the Doctor; "and so, gentlemen, I'm your most obedient;" and off he swaggered.

"Victor! Victor!" exclaimed my uncle, as the door closed, "can you possibly exist till to-morrow, without gratifying your curiosity? If you can, I'll order my horses, and we'll amuse ourselves with a morning's ride: I want to treat you with a few of our beautiful prospects, as well as our

beautiful maids. Egad! methinks the two songs selected last night by you and Elizetta Tonic, were extremely applicable to this said divinity, Miss Fitzclarence; not that I estimate the Doctor's judgment of beauty with that of a Paris; add to which, he looks through very defective optics."

CHAP. XIV.

THE horses were now ordered: my uncle mounted his old favourite mare, and I had Geoffry's strong black nag; and, in a jog-trot style, we proceeded through the village.

We had not gone above a mile, when, passing through a narrow lane, we met a gentleman on horseback, in the exact position of an X; that is to say, his elbows and toes were so horizontally stretched, they touched the hedges on each side.

"Good-morning, good Sir! How d'ye do? how d'ye do? I'm taking a little air," said the gentleman.

"That you've a right to, but not to *all* the road, by the by. Why, my dear fellow, there's no room to pass you: you're as formidable an object as a broad-wheel waggon. But what's the matter with you—you look poorly?" said my uncle.

"Eh! exactly so; I'm extremely asthmatic; I've wasted a pound within this fortnight, owing to profuse and constant perspiration: in short, Mrs. Dashwell is very asthmatic, and so's my daughter-in-law and my nephew; and the *maid's* very unwell."

"What! is *she* asthmatic too?" asked my uncle, with a suppressed smile.

"Eh! not exactly so: but, I assure you, Mrs. D——— is very ill; she's so *delicate* a constitution; she has not power to fetch the water to wash her hands."

"Indeed!" said my uncle, doubtingly, as he tossed up his chin: "a good, strong constitution, that can stand wind and weather, is a very enviable blessing."

"Exactly so: no woman possessed a better formerly," answered he.

"But we don't grow younger and stronger every day," cried my uncle: "and, perhaps, she may have made too free with her constitution in the early part of life; such as the damp *night air*, *high suppers*, *playhouse heats* and *colds*, and *so forth*. Those kind of things all take effect in time."

The gentleman turned pinkish, set up a hollow cough, tucked his toes under the saddle to give us room to pass, and, wishing us good-morning, cantered gently away.

"Your friend has brushed off in a hurry," said I.

"Yes," replied my uncle; "he's a bad digestion, advice sticks in his stomach, and an explanation of *causes* and effects always gives him a certain unexplanatory twinge. He's a keen tradesman of the day; boasts his horses, his *half pipe* of *Madeira*, his haunch, turbot, and game parties; and longs to sport a shell of calipash to establish his galas; where the city nobility, alias the ci-divant *penny-postman's son*, and the ci-divant *tallow-chandler's daughter*, always find an upper seat, amongst many other plebeian fashionables; and while there's strength enough in the *gunpowder* to make a *good report*, and prevent a *flash* in the *pan*, who so great, so consequential, while the rags circulate. But you're a novice to my hieroglyphics, Victor: you don't know the world in masquerade; yet it's a very necessary science

to learn. But here comes a chaise: you must squeeze your horse close into the hedge, or there'll be no room to pass.

The vehicle now approached, drove by a fat elderly woman; beside whom were stuck her two full-moon-faced daughters, in plebeian pomp, dressed in all the gaiety of presbyterian pride. She bowed, and immediately stopped her horse to facilitate our passing.

"Good-morrow, Ma'am," said my uncle: "I hope you are going to London to obtain an act of parliament for *widening* this road, since you've set up your *chaise;* it's well enough to bump along in a *cart;* and where a man's got his *bread* dependant, like *your husband,* why, the width of the road to *interest* is of little consequence."

"I assure you, Sir," answered the fat lady, "I am astonished the inhabitants don't rectify such a *nuisance;* I wonder they don't go to *law* with the commissioners of the roads: I'm sure I'd readily *sign* the requisition: a set of *confederating* wretches!"

"Aye; and, if they did not comply, you'd have no objection to lend us a hand to throw it into *Chancery!* Would you, Madam?"

"Indeed, I would," replied the lady, whose face flushed crimson. "I don't mean to take things as I *have done.* Thank God! we're out of *debt* and out of *danger.*"

"That's a comfort," replied my uncle. "There's nothing like honesty. I dearly love to see the *bond* of *generosity* cancelled by the stamp of *gratitude.*"

The lady's countenance changed from a *pink* to a damask-rose tincture; and, wishing us "good-morning," her chaise whirled on with its *cargo* of *hypocrisy*.

"And, pray, who is that group, Sir?" asked I:

"Why, it's Madam Sponge and her two girls, whom the unexpected windfall of a few thousands has raised from the abyss of poverty to the comforts of affluence, which their pride and folly will soon reduce to their former exigence; while the innocent and generous benefactor, whose unsullied fame they *vainly* strove to tarnish with the mildew of their calumniate breath, beholds, with the just abhorrence of every upright, honest man, the villainous principle of their corrupt hearts, and treats them with the sovereign contempt of *Virtue* trampling on the

scorpions of Vice, invulnerable to their *sting*. We shall pass their newly-embellished hovel presently; and it's a chance but we have a peep at the master, as well as the mistress. But let us trot briskly till the road widens, for it's very unpleasant meeting carriages; and methinks I hear more wheels advancing."

Scarce had we attained the wished-for extent, when a miller's cart approached; on the copse of which sat the miller and a farmer; both of whom bowed civilly, but spoke not; and the cart rattled out of sight.

"I must again apply to your biographical book of knowledge, Sir," said I.

"Why, those two persons are Farmer Strut, and his son, Cloddy the miller, going home from market. You ought to have made a bow to him, to grind away all your sins; for,

I assure you, he calls himself one of the *elect*."

"I don't comprehend, Sir."

"That's a sign you're not *enlightened*, like Miller Strut. A methodist preacher turned his brains about seven years ago, and converted the sinner to the saint; since which, he infected the major and minor part of his own family with the religious mania; which contagion spread through great part of the village. The females of the family were easily persuaded to adopt their brother's sentiments, but the elder and younger preferred their own opinion; while their father, the farmer, prudently considered there were more methods than one to pursue: he therefore suffered his wife and family to act in conformity to their feelings; while he rode up weekly to London, to arrange his *rag-shop*, see what *fish* was

best to fry, make his observation how the *grasshopper* jumped, take a peep at the *fat cattle* in *Racket-market*, and do a few convenient odd *jobs*—hear much, say little, *get* all he could, meet old friends with old faces, which, for want of walking in his spectacles, he mistook for *new* faces; for which reason he sold the *supposed masks* for the paltry sum of twenty pounds—the worst day's-work he ever did; precluding *all future grist* to the mill. But Farmer Strut pleased himself."

"Silly man!" said I.

"Aye; it is not every gander sees his own interest," replied my uncle.

CHAP. XV.

WE now jogged sociably on, calling at several cottages to distribute some of my uncle's mites, surveyed the beauties of the surrounding country, and returned home to dinner, well satisfied with our ride; after which my uncle took a short nap to recover the fatigue of his morning jolt, and I amused myself by looking over the library, where I found the highest amusement, till he finished his snore; at which time we retired to make some necessary alteration in our habiliments, and, at six o'clock, set off for our visit to Mr. Macfriz, who received us very politely, and, like Dr.

Tonic, introduced us, in the same form, to a room full of company and pictures; for the wainscot was so bedizened with the latter, that I could almost have supposed myself at the Royal Academy.

The first lady to whom we were introduced was Mrs. Macfriz, a most diminutive, ill-built woman; who, when she rose from her chair, appeared to fall upon her knees: her features were extremely plain, and her complexion almost a woman of colour; her dress antiquely grotesque, and her toute ensemble disgusting in the extreme.

Having gone through the ceremony of bowing and courtesying, we were introduced to the rest, in the following order:—Mr. and Mrs. Dashwell, Mr. and Mrs. Downright, Mr. Earwig, Mr. Undermine, Mr. Simon Undermine, and Mr. Consequence.

"You're late, gentlemen," observed Mr. Macfriz, drawing his watch; "it wants but a quarter to seven."

"You are incorrect, Sir," replied Mr. Dashwell, looking at his repeater; which example was followed by every watch in the room: but none cut so great a dash as Mr. Simon Undermine's, decorated with three immense large seals, suspended by a flashy chain, which he sat rattling in his hand, like a baby with its coral.

"Yes, indeed, I'm glad the gentlemen are come," said Mrs. Downright, an elderly woman, the epitome of vulgarity; "for I'm almost starved: I uses myself so to drink tea at five o'clock, that I'm like our black cat—I always looks for it, as the saying is."

No person made any answer; and Mrs. Macfriz rung the bell, which

produced two such high-piled plates of muffins and crumpets as might have victualled a small regiment; and Miss Macfriz was placed at the tea equipage to do the honours, to which her mama seemed incompetent.

A fine Dutch piece, by Teniers, having attracted my notice, I could not help giving praise to the genius of that charming artist.

"Yes, Sir, it's a beautiful *thing*," answered Mrs. Macfriz; "and I haven't had a little trouble to *clean* them all: this morning I was three hours mucking over them; for, being a *valeable* collection, I never suffers nobody to do nothing to them but myself."

"That's right," cried Mrs. Downright: "you're like me, as I say to my chuck, and there he sits—there's nothing like doing things one's-self:

I'm sure I'd more plague and mess with the *chimbley*-sweeps this morning than enough."

"And what weather we had for our *great wash* last week," interrupted the lady of the house.

"Well," said Mrs. Dashwell, "those are things I never trouble my head about; my constitution is too *delicate* to permit my attendance to household concerns."

"It's lucky you've no *call* to do it," replied Mrs. Downright: "but I likes it; I loves to be notable; not as I've any occasion, as the saying is; for *chuck* and I don't want for *stuff*. We have worked hard; both pulled the same way, and *scrope* up a good bag of sweepings for our little darling, Jenny. We ben't *musherroons!* No, no! We can buy our girl a husband any day. Can't we, *chuck?*"

Chuck grinned, and, distending his wide snub from cheek to cheek, gave lovey a nod of approbation, and sat twirling his thumbs, as dumb as an effigy: and the ladies having finished their *notable* conversation, Mr. Consequence began to expatiate on the various topics of politics; amongst which, arguments strongly enforced, and as strongly defended, the subject of city concerns took its rotation; on which he declaimed with great vehemence, supported by his neighbour, Mr. Undermine, who had been *mole-working* for his friend, Mr. Penslow, on the late common-council election, by *ousting* what he termed the *old* and *useless* members, such as had grown grey in the service of their constituents, expended their property in support of the rights of the situation, without deriving *one penny emolument*, and then receiving for

their pains the base ingratitude of being denominated *deaf*, *blind*, or *superannuated*, which rendered them *ineligible*, according to the *new system*, and erased names from the *honourable* list that would have honoured a much superior.

As the controversy increased, the gentlemen grew warm; Mr. Consequence declaring, it was highly proper to elect new, young, and able members. "'I headed the business in our parish last St. Thomas's day,' cried Mr. Consequence, "and ousted an old *deaf* member, who was laid on a sick bed, and, therefore, totally incapable of attending his precinct."

"Poor man!" said the humane Mrs. Downright, who possessed an excellent heart, which exhibited its virtues on many laudable occasions. "I think, Sir, *axing* your pardon,

you broke your ninth commandment most completely; for it was a very cruel action to a sick neighbour, if he was an honest member of society. My chuck wouldn't have *ficiated* in such a piece of treachery for the world: he'd have been ashamed of it."

"Oh dear! there's no shame in the case," observed Mr. Undermine. "My friend Penslow was a much more eligible man; and, therefore, we persevered, night and day, in our canvass, and succeeded to a miracle, compelling him to retire with *blighted* laurels, because he would not resign, consonant to my friend Consequence's *positive requisition*."

"Pardon me! pardon me!" exclaimed Mr. Dashwell; "Mr. Penslow's were the *blighted* laurels, torn from the pillowed brow of a worthy

veteran to adorn his own, where they must fade, *unenvied* and *unrespected*, as the emblems of corrupt *subtlety;* for I do hold it an unprecedented piece of *iniquity* and *mean* cowardice to attack an individual, merely because he is *defenceless*, owing to the affliction of Providence. For my part, I'm a common-councilman-maker; but I voted for no "jacks in office!"—not I."

"*Jacks in office!*" retorted Mr. Undermine, glancing an important look at his son Simon. "I hope, Sir, you don't mean to insinuate, that *I* am a jack in office!"

"I did not make any such pertinent allusion, Sir," replied Mr. Dashwell: "for, in fact, till you have brought it to my recollection, I had forgot your late lucrative *agency;* which, to be sure, in the literal sense

of the word, is a *government dependence*, and thereby renders your situation *official;* which, if I am not mistaken, I have heard disputed, as a point of *ineligibility*—hey! What say you, Mr. Earwig?"

Mr. Undermine, who had thus undesignedly knotted a lash for his back, because conviction popped the cap on his head, knitted his scowling brow, and, dropping his long chin an inch longer, while it quivered with passion, observed, "that any man who troubled his head with the concerns of another, in which he had no business to interfere, was an ignorant, impertinent fellow, who deserved proper correction."

"That's precisely my opinion," replied Mr. Dashwell; "for, I am well persuaded, one-half of your *city meddlers* had better attend to their count-

ing-houses, than squabble away the precious hours that ought to be devoted to business."

"No doubt! no doubt!" cried Mr. Earwig; who, like his insect brother, always creeps into the best situation, and never crawls into a crab-apple while he can glide into a pine—whispers *impracticable promises* into your ear, and slides his hand into your *convenient pocket*, with the same effrontery that he introduces himself to every great table; where, perching himself as near the president as an eminent stock of assurance will permit, he seizes his button, which he never relinquishes till fumigated with the effluvia of his snuff; and, bored with his ceaseless half-articulate Champaigne jargon, the disgusted auditor releases his *imprisoned* button, and resigns his uncomfortable seat to the vice, leaving

Mr. Earwig to buz his nonsense to some idle listener. Thus Mr. Earwig lives *cheap*, boasts innumerable invitations, *listens* to the *commoner*, *sides* with the *lord*, and loves all *great folks* and *great feasts*—considers himself occasional *king* of the *Rose in June* and the *Canterbury Mail*, in which he makes frequent convenient excursions, when the *spice* business does not require his attendance in London; and, being now on a visit in this village, chance jumbled us together. This intelligence I gained, in a whisper, from my uncle, who had known him many years.

"I assure you," whispered Simon Undermine to Mr. Macfriz, "father and I took a deal of pains to get in Mr. Penslow; which we never should have done, if the old member hadn't been too close confined with the gout to hobble round the ward; or else it

would all have been *dickey;* because he was a *favourite* inhabitant, who had been *bred, born,* and *patronised,* as member of the court, near *thirty* years. Egad! we'd tight work of it."

"I don't wonder at that; I never heard of such a thing in my life," said Mr. Downright, lifting up his hands and eyes. "But I hope the cruel disappointment didn't kill the poor gentleman: I heartily hope he's recovered."

"Oh, yes!" answered Mr. Consequence: "I've met him twice since, when I least wished it; and I hear he treats the matter with great contempt."

"Then, I say, he's a cock of the game!" vociferated Mrs. Downright; "and I'll bet a *farden* he could put half his parish into his pocket; aye, buy 'em, out and out! A rich man

has always more enemies than a poor one."

"Poh!" cried Mr. Undermine: "property's nothing to do with the common-council."

"Egad! I believe you," answered Mrs. Downright: "any thing does now-a-days, if they can but *kick up a bother*. Lord bless you! they all *squeedges* in, in hopes of getting the loaves and fishes that's given away, except my chuck; and everybody knows he wants nothing of nobody. They can't say, when he was churchwarden, that he ever flashed away with parish property, as *many folks do*."

Here Mrs. Downright drew up her head, dragged her pearl satin gown two inches higher into her lap, and took a good bonny mouthful of butter-soaked muffin, desiring her husband to do the same, after spreading

his silk handkerchief over his black sattins, which, she boasted, were her *own making*.

This caused a smile from some, a titter from Miss Macfriz, and a *grin simple* from Mr. Simon Undermine, whose cassimeres looked, by their dimension, as if he had borrowed them of Messrs. Gog and Magog at Guildhall, where Simon dearly loved to wedge himself in, along with his *par*, every Lord-Mayor's day, to a good dinner and dance with the girls; for, being now a man grown, he was occasionally his walking-stick or coachman; with an excellent family character, as a very *nice* young man, possessing all his father's virtues, and in a fair train to obtain a wife, whenever he can meet with *plenty* of *money;* as none other need apply for that preference, who could not bring at least five thousand; and

that's barely sufficient to help supporting six o'clock dinners, a two-wheeled basket, and a four-legged factotum.

Tea being over, the card-tables were adjusted, consisting of two whist, a speculation game, and a backgammon party, which created as much racket as the Stock Exchange, and highly perplexed Mr. Earwig and Mr. Dashwell: add to which, Mrs. Downright, who was on the losing game, kept repeatedly declaring she hadn't got a *play-first*, could turn up nothing but the *d—'s bedstead*, shuffled nothing but rubbish and *Yorkshiremen* into her hand, and should not win above two tricks; and, whenever her husband hesitated, "Don't be afraid; *clap* a *piece* of *butter* on it, my chuck!"

Mr. Consequence and Mr. Undermine both played extremely unsuc-

cessful, and thereby irritated their sour tempers; particularly that of Mr. Consequence, who had been all his life a member of the Snap and Snarl Club; for, though all the parish were compelled to bow to his decree, as its primary deputed guide and *guardian*, his sullen, morose, and disobliging temper rendered him much more an object of disgust than admiration.

CHAP. XVI.

THREE hours had glided away amongst the contents and non-contents, when Mrs. Macfriz requested the game might be broke up to make room for the servant to lay the cloth, which was, of course, immediately complied with; and the table was spread with an inundation of spoons, glasses, silver goblets, and numerous etceteras; till the entrance of three immense capons, a leg of pork, a smoaking tongue, with sallad, vegetation, pies, and custards, wholesale, completed the set-out; Mr. Macfriz presiding at the *head* of the table,

Mrs. Macfriz took the *bottom*, and the guests were promiscuously seated.

Now it happened to be the fate of Simon Undermine to sit next Mrs. Downright, who modestly requested the leg of a chicken; and wishing to hand her plate for that purpose, and enforce his attention, she gave him a violent slap on the shoulder, and exclaimed, "Come, cockey, hand up my plate—will you?"

Simon, bursting with indignation at her vulgar and familiar address, snatched it rudely from her, and called the servant to relieve his lily-white *do-nothing* of its incumbrance.

"I could have done that myself," said Mrs. Downright. "La! la! what a *tom bore* of a young man you be, Mister; you should always serve the ladies!"

Simon curled up his nose in derision, and turned his back upon her.

"You sha'n't be my son-in-law; you'd never do for my Jenny," continued Mrs. Downright, giving him a second slap, which acted like an electric shock on his nervous system. "Be so good to give me a slice of that there tongue."

"I thought you had got some," replied sulky Simon.

"That's we'll said," answered his father: "few ladies are in want of that article! Ha, ha, ha! Well said, Simon."

Mrs. Downright, nothing daunted by the retort of any puppy whatever, jumped up, and fetched herself a piece of bread; observing, those who were too indolent to *get* their bread ought to go without it.

"Then I should soon starve," replied Mrs. Dashwell, "for I could not earn mine now."

"Oh, there's more ways than one of *yearning* one's livelihood," replied Mrs. Downright: "if you could not do it one way, you *mought* another."

"But Mrs. Dashwell has no occasion to do it," replied her lord and master, piqued at his gross companion's *inuendo.*

"That makes no odds," replied Mrs. Downright: "what she *is*, and what she *may* be, are two very different things."

"Well, I'm a very happy man,' cried Mr. Earwig: "I'm like a gardener; I can raise my *salary* quicker than any man, and dispose of my *time* as I think proper." Then grinning at his own wit, and displaying his *amber dechements*, he actually

hummed the O. P. dance, while his plate was refreighting with bon-bons.

"And I'll tell you what you can do beside," said Mr. Consequence, in an audible whisper—"you can get the blind side of one great man, and the *deaf* side of another great man—eh, Earwig! you can do any thing but what you're *wanted*, we all know."

This caused a general laugh; but Mr. Earwig swallowed it in custard; and it died away.

At length the diligent Mr. Macfriz, wiping the pearls of notability from his face, ordered the fragments to be removed, and the wine set on the table.

Various patriotic toasts having briskly circulated, the ladies were called on for their favourites.

"Lord have ye! I've no favourites upon earth, but my chuck: however, I'll give you a toast," cried Mrs. Downright: "so here's a health to the poor sick gentleman, and may he live to see those *turn'd out* who *turn'd him out!* I *loves* a bit of tit for tat; but some folks *is* like the hedgehog—love to worm themselves *in*, and worm others *out*."

The glasses of Mr. Undermine and Mr. Consequence were very sparingly replenished, which being perceived by the Argus eye of Mrs. Downright, she insisted on bumpers, which was very reluctantly complied with.

My uncle proposed the addition of three cheers, in the energy of which applause he knocked off the foot of his wine-glass.

"Never mind!" exclaimed Mrs. Downright: "I'd sooner make Mr.

Macfriz a present of a dozen to-morrow, than lose the honour of my toast."

"Come, come! as we a'n't in the House of Commons, gentlemen, I *begs* we may be all *unonymous*, and not reap up old grievances. Who will give us a song? None of my family were born skylarks; but I've some notion Mr. Simon Undermine can tip us a stave," cried Mr. Macfriz.

Mr. Simon, who was sitting at full stretch on his chair, with his hands, as usual, *tucked into his breeches pockets up to his elbows*, assured the company, in his silly way, he never could sing in all his life, though he had had the advantage of plenty of singing-masters.

"How d'ye mean? how d'ye mean?" asked his father.

"Why, haven't I kept an aviary of Canary birds this *ever so long?*" replied Simon.

"Pish!" said his scarlet-faced papa, shocked at his son's nonsensical pun.

"Oh-ho, Monsieur Canarie!" exclaimed the pedantic Mr. Earwig (who loved to let the world know he had attained a smattering of French, as well as a few *Irish bulls);* "vous etes wit-ty."

Simon, abashed, sat silent; and, as I much suspected, my uncle pitched on me, requesting I would sing "Old Towler," with which I unhesitatingly complied, and for which I received some very high encomiums from everybody but Mr. Consequence and Messrs. Undermine.

Mrs. Downright soon afterwards found out she began to feel sleepy, and it was time for all honest trades-

folks to go home to bed; she therefore began pinning up her pearl sattin, which gave the signal of departure, and broke up the company.

"I think old Mother Downright cut up the *ousters* with a vengeance," said my uncle, as we walked home. "To be sure, she's a woman of very low extraction and rough manners; but she possesses an excellent heart of honesty and benevolence, and that's an equivalent. Few more comments passed, as the hour was late; and we therefore retired to rest.

END OF VOL. I.

Plummer and Brewis, Printers, Love-lane, Eastcheap.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 056517094